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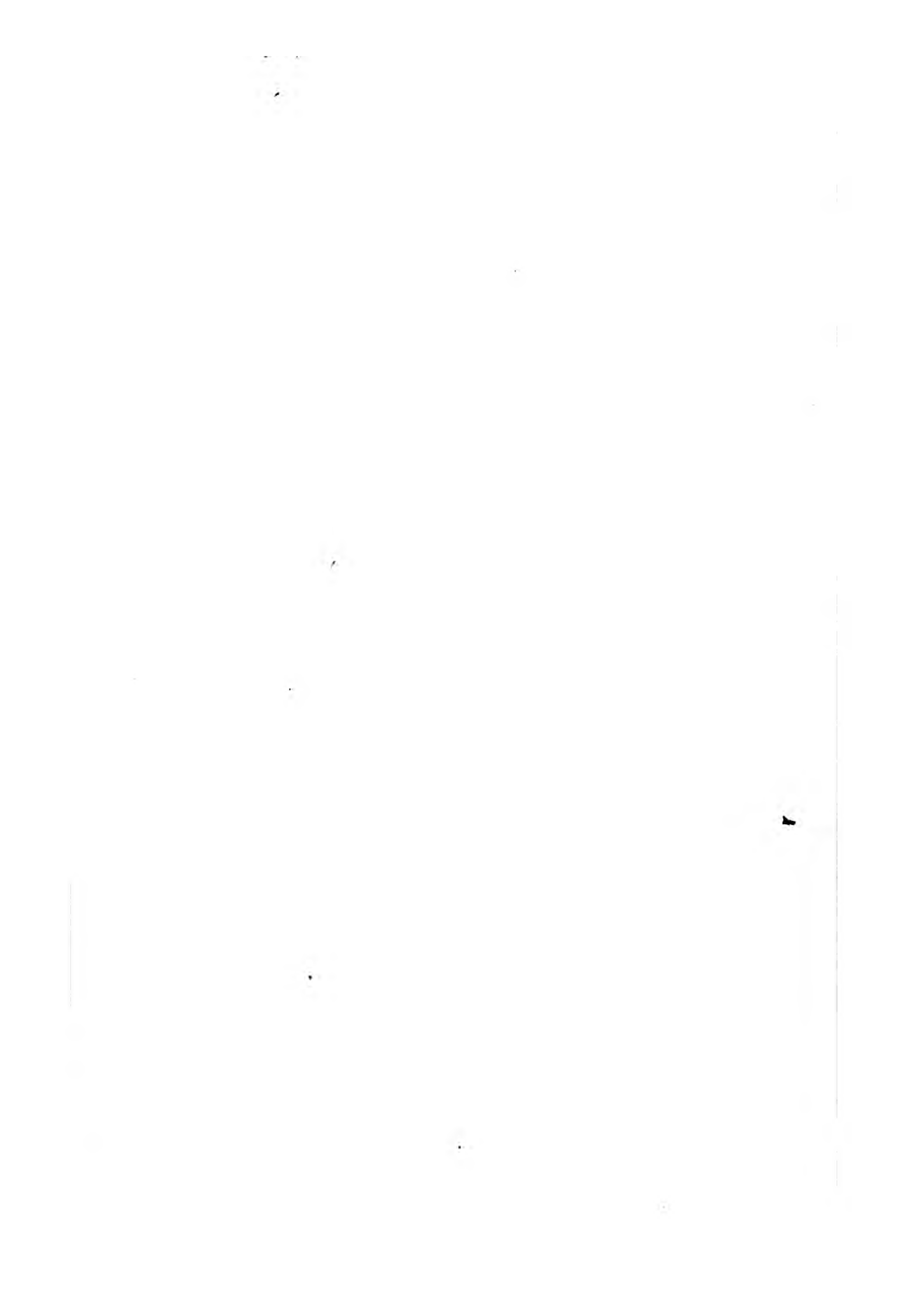


ANALYSIS
OF THE
BOOK OF JUDGES.









ANALYSIS
OF THE
BOOK OF JUDGES

WITH NOTES
CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL;
ALSO
MAP AND EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

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CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR
CANDIDATES PREPARING FOR THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE LOCAL,
AND THE COLLEGE OF PRECEPTORS' EXAMINATIONS.

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PREFACE.

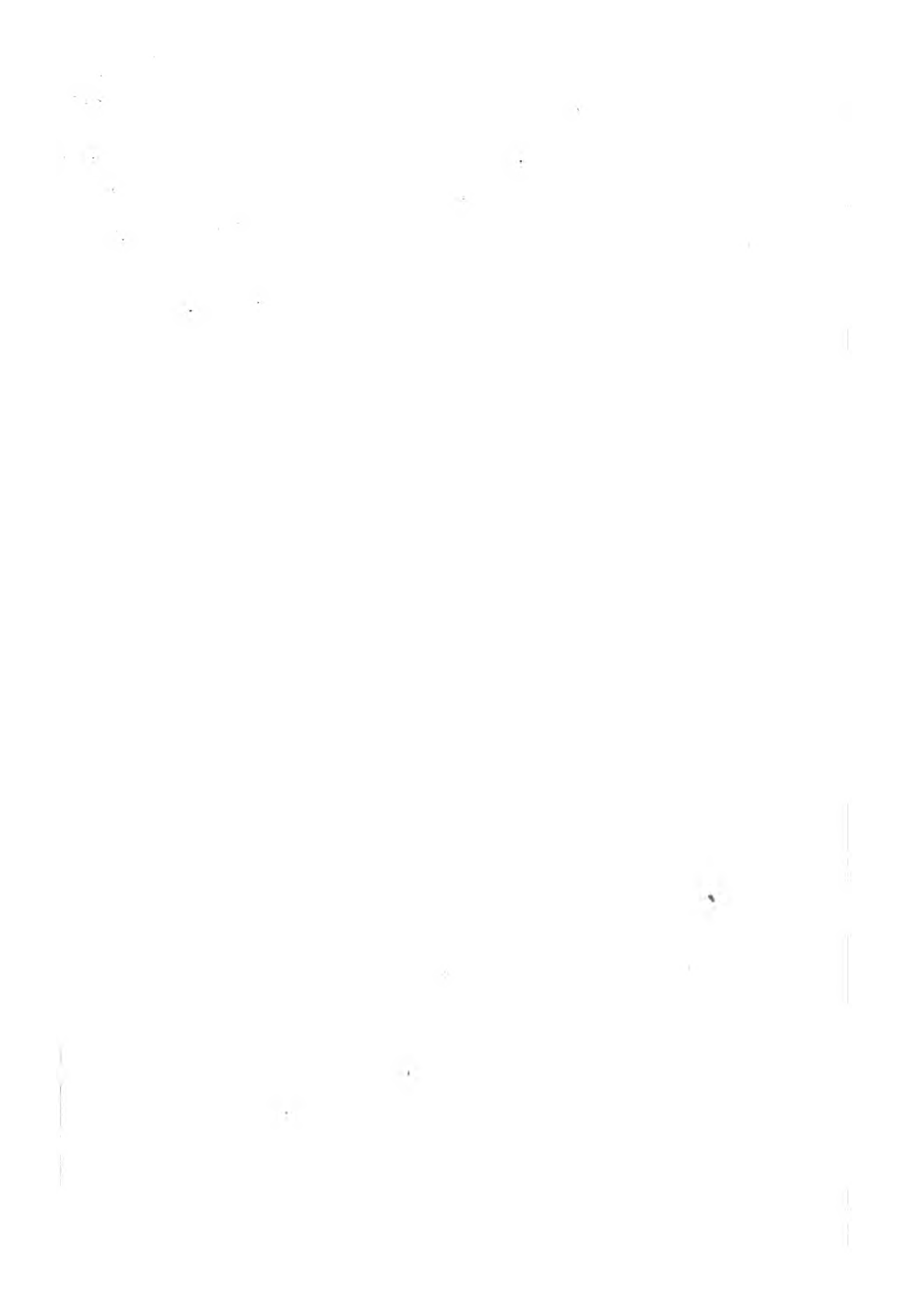
IN studying Scripture History, a great difficulty is often experienced by young students, in not being able to have a simple and connected view of the whole narrative, before entering upon the minute details. Being well aware of the existence of this difficulty, we have endeavoured to give the student, in a simple manner, such a view of the period of history contained in the Book of Judges, as will make the study interesting.

The plan of study we recommend is to read the narrative portion of this Analysis first, and after this is done to take the Bible and study the book, chapter by chapter, with the aid of the Notes, &c., as contained in the second portion of the Analysis. The student will thus have clearer notions of the subject than he had before. We also feel sure that it would be a good practice for the student to answer on paper, as home or class work, the questions set at the end of each chapter. He would thus get into the habit of thinking for himself before coming to the class, and the lesson would also be better prepared.

We hope that this little work will be useful, not only to those preparing for the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, but also to Sunday School Teachers and Scholars, and to others interested in Scripture study.

We shall be obliged to Teachers and others for notifying to us any errors they may discover.

L. H. AND T. B. J.



JUDGES.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD.—Joshua had been the instrument employed by God in defeating the Canaanites, and in dividing their possessions among the victorious Israelites. During the years that elapsed between the division of the land and his death,—some seventeen,—**Joshua** would doubtless be **looked up to** by the tribes of Israel **as their guide and counsellor**, perhaps even as their divinely-appointed ruler and judge. At his death a new state of matters was introduced ; a transition period began, which only ended about 450 years afterwards with the appointment of a king over Israel. Joshua had no immediate successor. During the eventful and critical period when the nation was taking root in the land given to it by God as an inheritance, and was being taught to familiarize itself with the theocratic government,—the direct government by God himself,—under which it was placed, “there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” It was a time of freedom and independence, and, as we find in the Book of Judges, which gives us an account of about 350 years of the period,—**a time of anarchy and disorder**. No one was universally acknowledged as leader or governor; there was no one round whom gathered the loyalty and affection of the people ; and, though Bethel or Shiloh might contain the Ark of God, which was the symbol of national union and privilege, there was no metropolis, no city which could be reckoned the

capital, or rallying point of the nation. The High Priest was a kind of prime minister of Jehovah, who exercised a general superintendence over the interests of the people, and each tribe had its own chiefs or elders, but there was no civil ruler, whom all acknowledged and obeyed. It was in these circumstances, when peculiar emergencies arose, that **God raised up the Judges**, who were avenging deliverers of Israel from the enemies who oppressed them, and who formed a class of intermediate governors between Joshua and the Kings of Israel. These judges, however, did not all occupy the same position, for **some of them were directly called of God** to their office, while **others were elected by the people**; some continued to rule for life, while others surrendered their authority when the special purpose for which they had been raised up was achieved; **some ruled over several of the tribes, while others only ruled over one tribe.**

During the period of the Judges, the state of Israel was very fluctuating and unsettled. As long as the generation lived "which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel," the nation "served the Lord," continued faithful to covenant engagements, and maintained a successful conflict with the Canaanites who still remained in the land. But the generation that followed forgot God, became weary in conflict, and gradually assumed the habits and mingled in the idolatries of the old inhabitants. The only foundation of safety and prosperity for Israel lay in a course of persistent antagonism to the Canaanites, and of united and resolute maintenance of the worship of God. That was the only bond of union, the only guarantee of order and prosperity. But the Israelites neglected the worship of God. Instead of striving to fulfil the divine

commission to extirpate the Canaanites, they entered into alliance with them. **The period, accordingly, was one of apostasy and rebellion against God.** It was a period of discord and division among the tribes themselves, for when once the bond which formed them into the one congregation of Jehovah was broken, the different tribes began to pursue their own separate interests, and eventually even to oppose and make war upon one another. **The period is a history of sin, of the punishment that followed, of repentance, and of deliverance.** It is a constant alternation of humiliation through hostile oppression, when the nation fell away from God, and of deliverance and blessing, when in penitence and faith it returned to Him. While, therefore, there is much in the state of Israel at this time by no means pleasing, perhaps in no part of Scripture can there be found such a succession of romantic incident, such a display of extraordinary events, and of miraculous proofs of divine interposition as in the history of the **fifteen Judges** who successively were **raised up by God**, as need required, **to deliver and govern Israel.** And it is specially instructive, as showing the benefits which flow from obedience to the commandments of God, and the terrible miseries which follow disobedience and rebellion.

THE UNION OF JUDAH AND SIMEON AGAINST THE CANAANITES.—Before his death, Joshua had gathered the heads of the people around him, and had set before them the entire destruction of the Canaanites by the divine help, as the reward of fidelity, as well as the dangers and consequences of apostacy. It was, therefore, the **duty of the tribes** to endeavour to **root out the Canaanites** who remained, that they might establish themselves in unre-

stricted and undisputed possession and enjoyment of the land which God had promised to them, and that they might not be exposed to temptation by the **idolatry** and immorality around them. After the death of Joshua, the tribes, remembering his admonitions and warnings, proceeded to arrange for the continuance of the contest. The will of the Lord was asked—probably through the **Urim and Thummim** of the High Priest—who should take the lead. Perhaps each tribe was ambitious of the honour, or was fearful of the danger to be encountered. Judah was selected to open the campaign, and an account is given of the victories gained, some of them by Judah singly, and others of them by Judah and Simeon conjointly. The possessions of the tribe of Judah bordered upon those of the tribe of Simeon, and therefore it was not unnatural that the assistance of that tribe should be asked in delivering their own allotments from the hand of the enemy. They were well encouraged for the contest by the assurance that God purposed to give them possession of the whole land. **The two tribes undertook the siege of Bezek and of Jerusalem.** In the neighbourhood of Bezek they obtained a complete victory over the united forces of the Canaanites and Perizzites, amounting to upwards of 10,000 men, and, finding in the city seventy princes “having their thumbs and their great toes cut off,” which would effectually incapacitate them for war, they inflicted upon King Adonibezek, when they caught him in flight, a similar punishment. **“As I have done so God hath requited me,”** said that king, in acknowledgment of the justice of that procedure. Adonibezek was taken to **Jerusalem, then called Jebus**, which seems to have been captured at the same time, though it did not come

into the sole and permanent possession of the Israelites till the time of David. The King of Jerusalem and his four allies had been slain by Joshua after the battle at Gibeon, but the capital had not been conquered. And even now, when the conquerors advanced still farther against the Canaanites in the mountains, **the Jebusites** retook it and rebuilt it, so that in the following age it was regarded by the Israelites as still a foreign city (Judges xix., 11, 12). **Jerusalem belonged by right to the tribe of Benjamin**, but its members could no more drive out the inhabitants than the members of the tribes of Judah and Simeon, so that they continued to live there, and were **not dislodged until the time of King David**. After the capture of Jerusalem, the mountainous country around, towards the south to the wilderness of Paran, was added to the extensive possessions of Judah, and the united tribes then proceeded to attack in succession Hebron and Debir upon the mountains, Zephath on the southern boundary of Canaan, Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron along the coast line. Some of these towns may have been conquered before and been retaken by the Canaanites, and even after this they were, as is well known, among the cities which belonged to the Philistines. It is evident that the victories obtained were only temporary and partial, for the old inhabitants gradually recovered strength, expelled the invaders, and were for ages an incessant source of annoyance and vexation to the Israelites.

CALEB'S SUCCESSES.—An interesting incident occurred at Debir in connection with **Caleb**, who was **now the sole survivor of the previous generation**. He promised **his daughter Achsah** to the man who should smite **Debir**

(then called **Kirjath-sepher**), and his nephew, or, it may be, his younger brother, **Othniel**—who became the first of the judges—**won the promised prize**, the successful champion receiving in addition a liberal dowry, “the upper springs and the nether springs.”

THE KENITES.—It is interesting to notice, too, that the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, and who at his request had accompanied the Israelites to Canaan (Num. x., 29), followed the children of Judah from Jericho, the palm city, into the desert of Judah in the south of Arad, and permanently settled there.

THE CONDUCT OF THE OTHER TRIBES.—The other tribes were aroused by the repeated successes of Judah and Simeon to make some efforts to extend their respective territories, and a short summary is given of their hostile attacks upon the Canaanites. By the aid of a citizen who turned traitor, the **tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh** took possession of **Bethel**—formerly called Luz—and the same powerful tribes assisted the Danites in the further subjugation of the Amorites. As a rule, however, the tribes, instead of earnestly setting themselves to obey the divine command to extirpate the old inhabitants of the land, gradually adopted an opposite policy, and permitted them to remain. They were strong enough to have extirpated them, for divine help had been promised and the assurance of success been given, but indifference to the honour and command of God, indolence, cowardice, and love of gain, made them content with imposing tribute. They perhaps found in the immediate possession of the skill and labours of their captives, in the imposing character of their worship, in

the silver and gold of their idols, and in the personal charms of their females, those very seductions from obedience to the true God, of which they had been so often warned, and which constituted one of the principal reasons for the awful order to destroy those nations utterly. The Canaanites, on the other hand, would have every motive to submit for a time to that yoke to which resistance seemed in vain, and to contract alliances which enervated the conquerors more than the conquered. It, therefore, now became the practice of the fickle though highly-favoured tribes of Israel, to spare the Canaanites who remained and to enter into alliances with them. Judah and Simeon were unable to exterminate the inhabitants of the plain, and the Benjaminites could not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem. Manasseh did not root out the Canaanites from the towns which had been allotted to it in the territories of Asher and Issachar, but simply made them tributary. Ephraim did not root them out in Gezer, nor Zebulon in Kitron and Nahalol, nor Asher in Accho and Zidon, nor Napthali in Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath; and while the "hand of the house of Joseph" lay heavy upon the Amorites in the towns on the borders of Ephraim, conquered them, and rendered them tributary, the Amorites of other parts forced the Danites up into the mountains, and ultimately compelled a large portion of them to emigrate and seek an inheritance in the far north of Palestine. As for the children of Asher, they seem to have dwelt among the Canaanites without any attempt to drive them out or make them tributary. Surely if Caleb was able to drive out the three sons of Anak from Hebron, the tribes might have been able to take their own share in the complete conquest of the land. Evidently the Canaanites endeavoured to defend with special determination the

great commercial roads which ran from the coast of the Mediterranean along the great plain of Jezreel to Damascus and Central Asia, and their war chariots were of special service in this part of the war. The Israelites, forgetting that Joshua, in reliance on God's help, had already obtained victories, even when these engines of war were employed, suffered their fears to prevail over their faith, and just when one bold stroke would have crowned their efforts with success, withdrew their forces and gave up the contest on payment of tribute, a kind of custom-house tax for permitting uninterrupted communication to be kept up.

The disastrous result of disobedience on the part of the Israelites to the commandments of God, was the existence of a powerful and compact mass of heathenism in the very heart of their possessions, which was the source of much weakness and mischief. **The two great facts** in the history **of the period** we are now studying, and the hinges upon which the history turns **are**, in fact, **the unfaithfulness of the Israelites and the idolatrous practices into which their heathen neighbours seduced them, and the faithfulness of the Lord to His covenant and His promises when they humbly recognised God's hand in the punishments that befel them, returned to Him in penitence, and implored His help.**

GOD'S WARNING AND EXPOSTULATION.—The writer of the Book of Judges, having given a cursory survey of the attitude of the Israelites to the Canaanites who were left in the land, proceeds to narrate the natural and necessary consequences of apostasy. The angel of the Lord announced to the people the punishment of God, for their breach of the covenant of which they had been guilty,

through their failure to exterminate their enemies. It would now happen according to the resolution and warning of God, that the Canaanites who had been spared, would prove an enticement to entangle them in idolatry, and so effect their ruin. The Israelites, by their intercourse with the old inhabitants of the land, had transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and the divine purpose in consequence of their disobedience is now made known to them.

For a time, at least, the people were deeply affected with a sense of their transgressions. They lifted up their voice both in confession of sin and deprecation of punishment. But, as the **history proves, the repentance was only temporary in its results**, and neither the chastisements inflicted by God upon His people by means of hostile nations, nor the sending of judges to set them free from hostile oppression availed to turn them from their idolatry. They not only forsook the God of their fathers, to whom they were indebted for the greatest blessings, but they served the gods of the heathen nations that were round about them. And when they continued in this idolatry and sank deeper and deeper in sin—

“The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.”—Judges ii., 20-22.

How great was Israel's sin! “They forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth.” “They went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in: they corrupted themselves more than their fathers in following other gods, to serve them, and to bow down unto them:

they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn ways." How severe the punishment that befel Israel on account of sin! "The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about. The hand of the Lord was against them for evil, and they were greatly distressed." But while the holiness and justice of God in the punishment of transgression is clearly illustrated, how admirable on the other hand is the display of His grace seeking to win His people to penitence, by saving interpositions, notwithstanding their perversity! "It repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them." "The Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them."

IDOLATRY OF MICAH AND THE DANITES.—The account of the **idolatry of Micah and the Danites** is narrated in the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Judges, but it evidently **refers to events which occurred shortly after the death of Joshua**, and is added as an appendix to the Book, in order to illustrate the tendency to image-worship which existed even at an earlier period of Israelitish history. It furnishes valuable materials for forming a correct idea of the actual character of that time, and of the disorder which prevailed during the wild unsettled period of the judges, from the want of a central governing authority.

A man of the mountains of Ephraim, **named Micah**, erected a splendid private temple for idols, which were made of silver belonging to his mother. This silver appears to have been appropriated by Micah, who, alarmed by the

imprecations pronounced upon the thief, had restored it to his mother. His mother blessed him for his acknowledgment of the theft. The silver, however, had been "wholly dedicated to the Lord," and so mistaken now were the ideas which prevailed in Israel regarding the worship of the true God, that Micah and his mother thought the best way to honour and serve Him with the 1,100 shekels of silver—about £135—they possessed, was to "make a graven image and a molten image." A little religious establishment, accordingly, was set up, similar to that at Shiloh, and in the house of Micah there seems to have been a fully-equipped service, modelled in general after the pattern of the lawful sanctuary, yet with idolatrous peculiarities, to suit his own taste. The account of the matter is given in a very brief and condensed form, and we cannot be certain as to details, but it would appear that 200 shekels were employed in the construction of an image, and the remaining 900 shekels in procuring an ephod, similar to the sacred dress worn by the high priest, and teraphim, mysterious little images connected with heathen consultation and divining, which were worshipped as oracles and the givers of earthly prosperity. To complete the delusion, or as Micah would have said, to perfect his system of divine worship, one of his sons was consecrated to fill the office of priest. This was against the express words of the law (Num. xviii., 7.), and Micah must have felt it to be the only defect in his arrangements, that no Levitical, and therefore rightful, priest countenanced his services. But what a signal illustration is this of the ignorance, superstition, and idolatry that prevailed when such gross enormities were permitted, when there was no one to convince Micah of his error and guilt, and punish his offence.

If Micah realised the defect in his arrangements, an opportunity soon occurred to supply his need. A young Levite from Bethlehem, in Judah, accidentally travelling in the neighbourhood, came to his house, and was persuaded by him to become the priest of his little temple. The remuneration offered was certainly small—ten shekels of silver, a suit of clothes, and his food—but the Levite was in want of a situation, he was a man of no position or principle, and was willing to be “a father and a priest” to Micah for the terms offered. Micah “consecrated the Levite,” an act wholly unlawful and profane. He thought the service of the Levite would render his worship pleasing to God, however idolatrous that worship might be, and he confidently expected the divine blessing.

But Micah did not enjoy the peace and prosperity he anticipated, and the Levite, upon whose idolatrous services he so warmly congratulated himself, became the means of his utter ruin.

A large portion of the tribe of Dan, forced by the Amorites into the mountains and excluded from the plains, feeling themselves too weak to force back the Canaanites and exterminate them, resolved to seek an inheritance other than that allotted to them in a distant part of the land. Their want of faith in God, and culpable remissness in expelling the old inhabitants, led them to fix upon the expedient of emigration as the only feasible scheme of relief. Five brave men were, therefore, selected to spy out the land, and explore it, that a suitable location might be secured. It so happened that the spies came to the mountains of Ephraim, and to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. There they recognised the voice of the

Levite, who gave them an account of his history and position. Instead, however, of being indignant to learn that a rival sanctuary to that at Shiloh had been set up, and that a renegade Levite had unlawfully assumed the functions of a priest, they requested him to ask counsel of God "that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous." An indefinite but apparently propitious reply was returned, "Go in peace : before the Lord is your way wherein ye go," and the spies, made sanguine and confident by the Levite's prediction, set forward on their journey. They penetrated to the northern extremity of Canaan to Laish, and found there a population who dwelt at ease in their rich and fertile valley, heedless of wars and conquests around, and living in a state of insulation and fancied security. On their return to their brethren they strongly recommended that an expedition should be despatched at once to secure this most eligible and inviting possession. Accordingly six hundred warriors were sent north by the tribe of Dan to seize Laish. Passing on their way the house of Micah, the warriors were informed, by those who had gone to spy out the country, of the ephod, teraphim, and image, and of the priest who conducted the services, and it was suggested that these would be a valuable acquisition to them in their new settlement. Action was forthwith taken to carry the suggestion into effect. While the priest was detained in conversation, the sanctuary was entered, and its contents seized. The priest, who was wholly influenced by self interest, was then induced to accompany the party, as **"it was better to be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel than to be a priest unto the house of one man."** Micah called together the people in his neighbourhood to pursue the

emigrants, and, on overtaking them, he uttered the bitter complaint, "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more?" But he was only warned to be silent, "lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life with the lives of thy household." Micah, seeing that the Danites were too strong for him, had to return home a poorer, but, let us hope, a wiser and a better man, having now had experimental proof of the helplessness of the idols in whom he trusted.

THE ILL-GOTTEN SPOIL WAS A CURSE TO THE DANITES.—They captured Laish, and on its ruins erected a city, which they named "Dan," but "they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh." The idolatry of a family had now extended to a considerable portion of a tribe. It was probably regarded by the Danites as a fortunate circumstance that **the Levite, who had been secured as priest, was no other than the son of Gershom, and a grandson of Moses, the great law-giver of Israel.** It is sad to learn that one who boasted such a noble ancestry acted so scandalously. The whole incident evinces almost incredible degeneracy on the part of God's chosen people.

THE INFAMOUS CRIME OF THE INHABITANTS OF GIBEAH.—About the same time as the above incident another event occurred which materially affected the fortunes of the tribe of Benjamin. The last three chapters of the Book of Judges are occupied with an account of this event. It also is a disgraceful picture of the times, and shows the disasters to which sin leads.

At the time when there was no king in Israel, no dominant authority to restrain and command, a Levite who sojourned in the more remote parts of the mountains of Ephraim, took to himself a concubine out of Bethlehem in Judah, who proved unfaithful to him, and then returned to her father's house. After the expiration of four months he went to request her to return, which she agreed to do. The hospitality of his father-in-law detained them for some days, but at length they proceeded on their journey, and arrived at Gibeah of Benjamin, which city was preferred as a place in which to lodge, to Jebus, *i.e.*, Jerusalem, then inhabited by strangers and enemies. Though the travellers sat down in a street of the little town as an invitation to the inhabitants to exercise hospitality towards them they met with a very cold reception. At length an old man, himself a stranger from Mount Ephraim, took notice of them, and urged them to accept entertainment in his house. While they were refreshing themselves after their journey the hospitable abode was surrounded by some wicked, licentious men, "certain sons of Belial," who demanded the stranger for the gratification of their unholy desires. The old man, the host, endeavoured to defend his guests by an appeal to the sacred rights of hospitality, and he even went the length, which the extremest case could not justify, of offering his own virgin daughter and the recovered concubine in lieu of the man who had sought and obtained his protection. No method of appeasing these worthless and wicked sons of Belial could be found except that of delivering up the concubine of his guest, who was so badly treated that she died next morning from the cruelty she had received. The Levite, determined upon vengeance, conveyed the corpse to his home. On his arrival he divided it into twelve pieces,

according to the number of the tribes of Israel, and sent one to each of the tribes, accompanied, doubtless, with an account of the outrage he had suffered and an appeal for vengeance. It was a shocking action, but as there was no supreme magistrate to whom to appeal for redress, it was probably the most effectual method of rousing the nation. And it succeeded. The twelve tribes felt constrained to avenge the horrible outrage; they solemnly bound themselves before the ark of the Lord not to return home till they had punished the offenders; they put to the sword all that remained in Gibeah, both man and beast, and burned all the cities and towns of Benjamin; they solemnly swore not to give their daughters in marriage to the sons of Benjamin, and cursed him that should do so; and, finally, they engaged themselves by a terrible oath to kill every Israelite who should not take arms against the Benjaminites. Thus the outrage was sternly avenged. Let us note some of the details. The tribes having been regularly convened, probably by Phinehas the high priest, no fewer than 400,000 men of war assembled at Mizpeh, the appointed meeting-place. Though the children of Benjamin had also been summoned, they took no steps towards healing the breach that had occurred and preventing the consequences that ensued. By their absence they connived at the sin that had been committed, and became partakers of the guilt of the men of Gibeah. When called upon to further the ends of justice by delivering up "the children of Belial which were in Gibeah," instead of doing so they gathered themselves together to fight against their brethren. 26,000 of their men of war went forth to battle. At the first conflict 22,000 Israelites were slain, and on the second day 18,000. The united tribes, confounded by these repeated strokes of adverse

providence, even after they thought they had obtained the Lord's sanction and help, humbled themselves before God and offered sacrifices. God now promised to deliver the children of Benjamin into their hands. By a skilful stratagem the Benjamites were drawn away from the Gibeah, which was the scene of the struggle, but liers in wait came forth out of their places and smote all who were left in the city and set it on fire. When the Benjaminites saw the great flames rising from the city they turned from the pursuit, but now they found themselves surrounded in front and in rear. No fewer than 25,000 men of Benjamin were slain, and only 600 of the entire army escaped.

After the war, which had issued so disastrously for Benjamin, was over, a feeling of deep sympathy for Benjamin and of regret, followed. It was felt that the purpose of the war was just and right, but it was also felt that the spirit in which it had been waged, and the extremity to which it had been carried, were wholly indefensible. The tribes had been rash in the vows they had made against their brother, for they had sworn in Mizpeh to treat him as they would treat the worst of the devoted Canaanites, with whom they were utterly forbidden to intermarry. And they had carried their revenge to an extent that was unnecessary and sinful. They therefore found little cause for triumph in their recent victory, and they celebrated the event, not by the voice of joy and praise, but by that of lamentation and woe. They humbled themselves before God, bitterly reproached themselves for their unbrotherly conduct, and took measures to repair the breaches which their own haste and infatuation had occasioned. **There was danger of the extinction of one of the tribes of Israel, for all had been slain save the 600 men** who had escaped, and

who for months abode in the rock Rimmon. The question came to be, how, in accordance with their oath not to intermarry with Benjamin, wives should be provided for those 600 men. It was found that none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, a city of the half-tribe of Manasseh east of Jordan, had come to the assembly, and the tribes resolve upon summary vengeance, and then from among these defaulters, to select wives for the remnant of Benjamin. **We fear a second crime was committed to repair the consequences of the first,** for the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, with the women and the children, were slain with the edge of the sword, but 400 young virgins were secured, and by these, as a pledge of their repentance and continued affection, they persuaded the surviving warriors of the tribe of Benjamin to come forth from the place of retreat and be reconciled. To supply the 200 not thus provided with wives another contrivance was arranged. At the annual feast in Shiloh, the women were accustomed to indulge in dancing and other recreation, and the 200 were invited to catch, on that occasion, every man his wife, of the daughters of Shiloh. As the women were taken by force and fraud, without the knowledge or consent of their fathers and brethren, the oath which had been made, though evaded, was not voluntarily and literally broken. The incident may be extenuated by the circumstances, but it certainly is not commendable.

Everything being thus happily adjusted, the tribes separated, each to its inheritance. But this occurrence, like the preceding, shows the anarchy that prevailed, and the enormities which were committed "when there was no king in Israel."

THE OPPRESSIONS AND DELIVERANCES OF ISRAEL.—**An account is given in the Book of Judges of six different oppressions and deliverances.** 1. The oppression of the Mesopotamian king, Chushan-rishathaim, which lasted for eight years, and the deliverance by Othniel, which was followed by a rest of 40 years. 2. The oppression by the Moabitish king, Eglon, which lasted for 18 years, and the deliverance of Ehud, which was followed by a rest of 80 years. 3. The oppression by the Canaanitish king, Jabin, which lasted for 20 years, and the deliverance by Deborah and Barak, which was followed by a rest of 40 years. 4. The oppression by the Midianites, which lasted for seven years, and the deliverance by Gideon, which was followed by a rest of 88 years, this period including the reigns of Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, and Jair. 5. The oppression of the Ammonites, which lasted for 18 years, and the deliverance by Jephthah, which was followed by a rest of 31 years, this period including the reigns of Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. 6. The oppression by the Philistines, which lasted 40 years, and the deliverance by Samson, which probably was followed by a long period of rest. **Of the 15 judges, whom successively God raised up, perhaps only eight were deliverers from foreign oppression, viz., Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson;** the others, viz., Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Eli, and Samuel being only judges who administered the laws and ordinances of the Lord. The Israelites had grossly failed in their duty to exterminate the inhabitants of Canaan, and succeeding generations were appointed to reap the bitter fruits of their neglect. Five lordships of the Philistines in the south-west, all the Sidonians and the Hivites, that dwelt about Mount Lebanon,

besides scattered Canaanites in various regions throughout the land, were left to prove and vex them. There seems to have been very free and general intercommunion and intermarriage, and God employed those very nations with whom Israel entered into friendly alliance to be scourges and instruments of wrath.

THE OPPRESSION OF CHUSHANRISHATHAIM.—Israel's sin brought on the people the judgment of a holy and righteous God. The chosen people had failed to exterminate the Canaanites in accordance with the divine command. This entailed the compromise of living among them and maintaining intercourse with them. Then followed intermarriages, a prolific source of degeneracy in all ages. Denial of God and opposition to His worship, serving the gods of the heathen around, and prevailing immorality brought down upon Israel the divine displeasure. God loves His people, but He is jealous for His own holiness. His anger is judicial righteousness, which will by no means clear the guilty. He marks His retributive justice by making the tempters to whom Israel yielded to become Israel's tormentors. The instruments of their sin become the instruments of their punishment. When they broke through the hedge of their separation from other nations they deprived themselves of the fence of God's protection, and were easily enslaved.

The first oppressions of Israel came from the region of Babylon, as their captivity ages after was in Babylon. "The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of the King of Mesopotamia," who held them captive for eight years. Their servitude probably consisted in being obliged to pay tribute

to the conqueror, and suffer other degrading and cruel exactions. No details are given either of the servitude or method of deliverance. It is simply stated that the distresses of Israel constrained them to cry to Him whom they had forsaken in their time of prosperity, that the gracious compassion of God was moved by the groanings of His people, and that He **raised up Othniel to deliver them**. For forty years afterwards peace and prosperity were enjoyed.

THE OPPRESSION OF EGLON.—The death of Othniel led to renewed corruption. God, therefore, permitted the Moabites to become too powerful for the Israelites, and, with the help of the children of Ammon and Amalek, who were predisposed by ancient enmity to enter into such an alliance, to take Jericho, which commanded the fords of the Jordan, and to enforce submission. After enduring this servitude for eighteen years the Israelites cried unto the Lord, who raised up Ehud as a deliverer. Ehud was sent as the head of a deputation which conveyed a present to Eglon, the King of Moab. The present was offered, and Ehud and the party were on the journey homewards when Ehud returned to the palace, and by request obtained private audience of the king. Ehud professed to have a message from God unto the king, who, on hearing this, rose to show due respect to a divine communication. He then took the opportunity of the king's rising to stab him with a dagger which he had secreted under his raiment. The oppressor of his country being thus removed, he induced the Israelites to secure the passes of the Jordan, and to destroy every Moabite who attempted to cross. Ten thousand Moabites were slain, and Moab was subdued. "The land had rest four score years."

Of the deliverance from the Philistines, which is said to have been effected by Shamgar with an ox goad, nothing is known. Probably during the period of rest, just mentioned, the Philistines suddenly invaded the country for purposes of plunder, and Shamgar, availing himself of the only weapon he possessed—the ox goad, with which he was driving his oxen—fell upon the invaders and routed them. The incident may have resembled that of Samson, when, by divine help, he killed thousands of the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. More probably, Shamgar placed himself at the head of a hastily-gathered band of country people, who, arming themselves with the implements of tillage with which they were occupied, by an unexpected onslaught drove out the enemy. But to Shamgar also the honour belongs of having delivered Israel.

THE OPPRESSION OF THE CANAANITES.—The history of the Israelites is a painful and humiliating picture of the corruption of our common nature. The whole Bible is a continued history of human apostasy and of divine interposition. In the case of Israel, the chastisements and the gracious deliverances vouchsafed by God, seemed alike to fail in securing their reformation and constant fidelity. After the death of Ehud, the services of the sanctuary were neglected, and they again relapsed into idolatry. For this God “sold them into the hand of Jabin,” the king of one of the Canaanitish tribes, which they ought to have destroyed. This Jabin was perhaps a descendant as well as successor of the king of the same name, who also reigned in Hazor, and who was routed and slain, and his city burned by Joshua (Joshua xi., 1-10). The city had been rebuilt and its power regained, and now the King of Hazor

obtained an ascendancy over Israel and heavily oppressed them. The Canaanites, provoked by their former defeat, would naturally make the burdens of the Israelites as grievous as possible, and these burdens would be made heavier by the reflection that but for their own cowardice, indolence, and unbelief, their present oppressors might have been exterminated. For 20 years Jabin oppressed the children of Israel, and then they "cried unto the Lord." The Lord showed His compassion and grace by qualifying Deborah for the work of deliverance. This **Deborah** was evidently a woman of great holiness and knowledge of divine things. She was **endowed with the gift of prophecy**, the first case of the kind recorded since the death of Moses probably 200 years before. Sitting under the pleasant shade of her palm tree she was accustomed to give counsel and advice, to redress grievances and determine causes, especially in matters pertaining to the law and the worship of God. Being a woman, she was not so likely to excite the jealousy and interference of Jabin. But Deborah, by divine inspiration, commanded the assistance from Barak, a native of Kedesh-naphtali in the far north of Palestine, by whom 10,000 men, chiefly of Zebulun and Naphtali were speedily enlisted to rid the country of the oppressor. Deborah, at Barak's request, accompanied the army, but she assured him that on account of his want of courage and faith the glory of the victory should belong chiefly to a woman. Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host, being informed of these preparations to oppose his power, gathered his forces at the river of Kishon. He collected a mighty host, and had with him 900 chariots of iron. But "the Lord had gone out" before Barak had put everything in readiness for his achieving a great victory, "and the

Lord discomfited Sisera." A supernatural panic seems to have been produced in Sisera's army, caused probably by a storm of wind, rain, and hail, and by this panic chariots rushed against each other and were broken, and horses and men were mingled in wild confusion, making them an easy prey to the swords of the Israelites. The entire army was destroyed. "There was not a man left." When Sisera saw that the battle was lost he alighted from his chariot and fled on foot. He came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, a descendant of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, who had emigrated to the northern part of the land. The Kenites were on a friendly footing with the subjects of Jabin, and Jael invited Sisera into her tent to offer him probably the ordinary hospitalities which the Orientals have ever been accustomed to show to strangers and travellers. But on discovering who her guest was, while professing kindness to him in order to increase his confidence and feeling of security, she was prompted to a bold action. She heartily sympathised with the people of God, and bravely resolved to destroy their oppressor. Taking "a nail of the tent," one of the long spikes which were driven into the ground, and to which the cords that secured the tent were attached, and a hammer or mallet, "she went softly unto him and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary." When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera, Jael took him into her tent and showed him his enemy lying dead with the nail in his temples. **"So God subdued on that day Jabin, the King of Canaan, before the children of Israel."** A beautiful triumphal ode was composed by Deborah to celebrate this signal victory over the **armies of Jabin**, an ode in whose lofty and

impassioned lines there is an expression of gratitude to God for past manifestations of power and goodness ; a graphic description of the oppression under which the nation had groaned in consequence of their apostasy, and of the happy state of security and peace now to be enjoyed ; an enumeration and review of the tribes which had joined the standard of Barak, and through whose patriotic bravery their country had been redeemed ; a bitter and sarcastic reproof to those tribes which remained at home ; a vivid account of the crisis of the battle and of the circumstances attending the death of Sisera, and a fervent prayer that all the enemies of God may perish in a similar way, while all who love Him gloriously prevail. After this victory the land had rest forty years.

THE OPPRESSION BY THE MIDIANITES.—In the period of peace and rest which succeeded the overthrow of Jabin, the blessings of deliverance from oppression were again forgotten. The time graciously given for improvement was, as formerly, grievously neglected and abused. Regardless of past judgments, ungrateful for past mercies, “the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.” The Lord had again recourse to the rod of punishment, and “delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.” About 200 years before, a great portion of this race had been cut off by Moses (Numb. xxi., 1-18), but they had recovered themselves, had rapidly increased in power, and now they prevailed against the sin-weakened Israelites. As Midian occupied a very low place among the nations of that period, while Israel could boast of a superior position, lineage, and promises, this servitude was peculiarly galling. Evidently the Midianites took every opportunity of heaping insult and injury on the heads of

their ancient conquerors, so that the Israelites were obliged to conceal themselves in retired holes and fastnesses. After the Israelites ploughed and sowed their fields, the Amalekites and various mixed tribes fearlessly pitched their tents in the very heart of the country, and secured all the crops as they came to maturity. "No sustenance was left for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass." Great hordes of wandering Arabs possessed and ravaged the land. Need we be surprised to learn "that Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites." Their intolerable condition led them to "cry unto the Lord," and He, ever ready to hear the cry of the miserable when salutary discipline has done its work, was pleased to send a prophet to rebuke them for their sins which had caused these sufferings, and to intimate that deliverance should follow repentance and reformation.

The deliverer whom God raised up at this time was Gideon, the youngest son of Joash, who belonged to the family of Abiezer, and resided at Ophrah, near the western bank of the Jordan. While Gideon was threshing some wheat, which he had contrived to save from the rapacity of the Midianites, under the spreading branches of an oak, so as to be sheltered from the scorching rays of the sun, and concealed from the sight of the ever-watchful enemy, suddenly a person appeared and accosted him with the words, "**The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.**" This expression may have referred to some display of courage and prowess already made by Gideon, or it may have been the promise of strength for the work to which he was now to be called. Gideon, who had evidently been pondering over the humiliating condition to which his country for the seven previous years had been reduced, and was longing for an opportunity to strike a decisive blow, and so rid the land of

those multitudes of insolent and rude oppressors who had poured down upon the rich plains of Judea and rifled every vineyard, barnyard, and fold—understood the remark as referring to his country as a whole, and not to himself individually. He therefore replied, “If the Lord be with *us*, why then is all this befallen us?” and he expressed surprise that the Lord if with them did not deliver them from the Midianites as He had delivered their fathers from the Egyptians. **Gideon** was **despondent**, he thought God had forsaken them, and he reckoned it mockery to assure him of the Lord’s presence and favour when the Midianites continued to insult, plunder, and oppress. **“And the Lord looked upon him.”** The person who had appeared was a divine being, “the Lord,” and gave him a commission of service, and all the qualifications necessary to the execution of it. “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.” Gideon humbly acknowledged his unworthiness and unfitness for such a work, for he was poor, impoverished, uninfluential, and the youngest of his father’s sons; but the **Lord assured him of help** and of **final success**. He seems, however, to have still **entertained** some **doubt** of the reality of this appearance, and of the **truth of the divine message**, and he respectfully **solicited** the favour of some **sign** from heaven of such a nature as to remove every remaining misgiving from his mind. With a view of fulfilling the demands of hospitality, and, at the same time, of furnishing an occasion for the sign he wished, Gideon entreated him not to depart until he should bring forth his “present”—*i.e.*, his offering to God. On the proposal being received with favour, “Gideon went in and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he

put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it." Gideon's doubts were soon dispelled. No sooner had he as directed laid out the provisions upon an adjoining rock than the visitor "put forth the end of his staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and unleavened cakes, than there rose up fire out of the rock and consumed them." With what intense interest must Gideon have watched this remarkable phenomenon, and how thoroughly must all his doubts, as to the messenger and the message have disappeared when, rising with the smoke of the burnt offering, the celestial visitor vanished from his sight. Gideon instinctively shook with fear at the idea of having seen an angel of the Lord (or the Lord-angel) face to face, but the Lord, if not now in bodily form, at least with audible voice, reassured the trembling man with the gracious words: "**Peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die.**" Upon the top of the rock on which the miracle had been wrought, Gideon built an altar to the Lord, and called it **Jehovah-shalom**—Jehovah, the self-existing one; and shalom, peace.

With strangely mingled emotions Gideon must have laid himself down that night to sleep. And as he was revolving the details of the wonderful event, from out of the profound darkness and silence that reigned around, the voice of the Lord again broke upon his ear, commanding him to destroy the image which his idolatrous father had erected to Baal, to consecrate to the Lord what previously had been employed in the worship of the heathen god, and with all due formalities to offer in sacrifice his father's second bullock. It was a dangerous enterprise to which Gideon was called, but he did not shrink from engaging in it. With promptitude and decision, and with the help of ten servants, the command

was obeyed. By night—because he feared he might be opposed by his own relatives, and incur the anger of the Midianites if done openly—the altar of Baal was cast down, the grove that was by it cut down, and the bullock offered. The work had been promptly and effectually performed, and then Gideon and his men retired. Next morning there was great commotion among the inhabitants of Ophrah, and questionings who had been guilty of such sacrilege. The new altar erected near the winepress and wide-spreaking oak of Joash, the father of Gideon, and perhaps previous suspicions that Gideon was disaffected to the prevalent idolatry, quickly assured them that he had done it, and nothing but his blood could now satisfy the persecuting rage of his idolatrous fellow townsmen. Joash, though an idolator, does not seem to have been a bigoted votary of Baal, and he refused to be a party to the death of his son, arguing with them that **if Baal be a god he will be quite able to avenge his own cause, and, if not a god, he, unable to defend himself, is unworthy of the defence of others.** From that time **Gideon** was called **Jerubbaal**—a standing defiance to Baal, as the name implies.

The courage and patriotism of Gideon were soon put to the test. The Midianites and their allies crossed the Jordan, and traversed the country as far as to the borders of Manasseh and Issachar. Gideon, endued with supernatural zeal and heroism, assembled his relatives, and through them collected volunteers from the neighbouring tribes to oppose the advance of their oppressors. His faith, however, was still wavering; the number and power of the enemy intimidated him; and it was only after God in his wonderful grace and condescension vouchsafed to him new tokens of His

divine compassion that he began the contest. **The alternate wetting by dew of some fleeces and of the whole ground was incontestable evidence of the presence and help of God**, recollecting which, he was able to look unmoved on the swarms of Midian; unmoved, to see his army of more than 30,000 men reduced by coward flight to one-third their number; unmoved, to see the 10,000 who remained, reduced by divine command, lest Israel should boast that the victory had been secured by their own strength, to only 300 men. At the head of this small band of chosen, brisk, and enthusiastic men, and with no other instruments of assault but a lamp, an empty pitcher, and trumpet, Gideon was confident and ready to meet the host of Midian. But God gave him still further encouragement, and this time by **another remarkable sign**. Being commanded by God to go down secretly and under the shelter of night into the **enemy's camp** accompanied only by Phurah his servant, **Gideon overheard a man tell a dream to his companion about a cake of barley bread**, which tumbled into the host of Midian and overturned one of the tents. His companion answered, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel : for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host." Both the dream and the interpretation were so manifestly of God, they proved so clearly the terror-stricken state of the Midianites, and promised so pointedly a decisive victory that Gideon, after duly acknowledging his gratitude to God for such encouragement, immediately prepared his little army for the encounter. Dividing the 300 men into three companies, and giving each man a trumpet, with empty pitchers and lamps, they went down to the camp, blew their trumpets, brake their pitchers, and held aloft their lamps. And by this

strange stratagem the battle was won. The Midianites in the darkness formed an exaggerated idea of the numbers by which they were beset. They were astounded by the noise of the crashing pitchers, the shouts of assailants reverberating on every side of the camp, and the sudden glare of 300 torches, and they fled in panic and confusion. The battle cry "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," struck terror into their hearts. Unable in the darkness to distinguish friend from foe, every man's sword was turned against his fellow. When that portion of Gideon's army that had been dismissed learned that the Midianites had fled, they joined in the pursuit and helped their brethren to obtain a complete victory. The men of Ephraim, too, by the request of Gideon, occupied the fords of the Jordan, and took two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, whose heads, according to almost universal custom in the East, were taken as trophies to the victorious general.

It is pitiable to read, immediately after the account of this signal victory, of the disaffection shown by the men of Ephraim towards their brethren of Manasseh because they had not been invited earlier to share in this battle of deliverance. By wise and conciliatory words Gideon calmed their unreasonable jealousy and anger, and then he and his 300 men, though fatigued with what they had already accomplished, hastened on in hot pursuit to capture the kings of Midian. On the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel refusing bread to his famished men, Gideon promised them signal punishment when he should return. These people doubtless deemed it highly improbable that Gideon should succeed, and dreaded the vengeance of the Midianites. But Gideon was strong in faith, and assured of safety and triumph. The kings of Midian had still 15,000 men with them at Karkor,

but, taking an unsuspected route along the territories of the Arabs, who dwell in tents, he fell upon them and smote the host. The two kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, were taken, and on their confession that they had slain his own brother, Gideon put them to death; he himself slaying them instead of his young son Jether, who was afraid, "for" as the kings well expressed it, "as the man is, so is his strength." Terrible retribution befel the men of Succoth and Penuel, the flesh of the former being torn with thorns, a slow and painful mode of putting them to death; the latter was slain, and their tower, in which they trusted, demolished.

Though Gideon narrowly escaped death from the citizens of Abiezer, and had to encounter much prejudice and ill will, he was now, with singular unanimity, offered the crown of Israel as a reward of his decision and fortitude and the success which had attended him. But Gideon perceived the spiritual revolution involved in this proposal, for Jehovah was their King, and with disinterested patriotism and respect for the divine will, he piously declined the proposed honour. He might serve them as a judge, but he would not rule over them as a king. And yet the nobility of Gideon in declining this proposal was rather marred by the request he made, that "every man would give him the earrings of his prey." The request was very readily complied with, but it was very unfortunate in its results. Besides the fifty-three pounds of gold thus obtained, Gideon had secured other ornaments that belonged to the kings of Midian, and with these spoils in his house at Ophrah he assumed much regal authority and splendour. Nor did regal state satisfy him. He assumed sacerdotal power as well. The command given by the angel who appeared to him to build an altar and sacrifice thereon to Jehovah, perhaps led him to think that

he was fully authorised to officiate in this way. An ephod being the usual appendage to the priestly office, he had one formed and finished in sumptuous style, and in this rich vestment he offered sacrifice at Ophrah. "All Israel went thither a whoring after it ;" they resorted thither to enquire the divine will instead of to Shiloh, the one seat of worship appointed by Jehovah himself. Gideon had made one false step, and it not only was a source of evil to himself personally, but proved the occasion of sin and ruin to his family. However, God had used him as His instrument in delivering Israel, and so thoroughly had the work been accomplished that the Midianites never again dared to invade or annoy the Israelites in their possessions. **"And the country was in quietness for forty years in the days of Gideon."**

THE REIGN OF ABIMELECH.—There is much that is dignified and heroic in the character of Gideon. He was not, however, without his faults. Besides those already referred to, he indulged in polygamy, though multiplying wives was directly forbidden by God, and this sin was followed in the case of Gideon with all the usual unhappy consequences. He had seventy sons by his wives, and, besides these, a son called Abimelech, whom "a concubine that was in Shechem bare him." Abimelech, on account of his position by birth, could not inherit, but he was very ambitious, and as soon as his old father died he resolved to disinherit his brothers and secure royal position and power. By this time the influence of Gideon's character and work had been greatly lessened, and the children of Israel felt no gratitude either to God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side, or to Gideon, who had shown such a

deep interest in Israel's welfare. "The children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god." Abimelech took advantage of this apostasy and of the desire which now prevailed for a settled form of government under an earthly ruler, to forward his sinister designs. His first step was to enlist his relations on the mother's side in his interest, and to sow the seeds of suspicion and jealousy among the tribes. He accused his seventy half-brothers of exercising domination over their countrymen, though there is no evidence that they had any intention to assume despotic sway, and he induced the people of Shechem on account of his relationship to support his claims to royalty. With silver given to him by the men of Shechem, and which they obtained from an idol's temple, Abimelech hired some worthless and abandoned men to follow him, and he then put an effectual end to the rivalry of his brethren by slaying the whole seventy of them, at Ophrah, with the single exception of Jotham, who contrived to escape. It was a cruel transaction, and is a lamentable evidence of the extent to which uncurbed and ruthless ambition will lead those who are under its power. The men of Shechem made Abimelech king, and to give the greater solemnity to the proceeding, proclaimed him king at the oak tree in Shechem, which had become surrounded with hallowed associations, and endeared in the memory of all Israel by Joshua's solemn covenant with the people there (Josh. xxiv, 26, 27). As soon as **Jotham** was informed of this he hastened to the top of Mount Gerezim, whence he overlooked Shechem, and **addressed the inhabitants in a parable descriptive of the modesty of Gideon in refusing the sovereignty as contrasted with the vanity of the present aspirant to royal power.** It is

a parable of great beauty, and its simplicity, force, and adaptation to the circumstances, impart to it the most touching pathos. The services rendered by his father to an ungrateful people, the humility which his father had manifested, the low birth, the cruel and ambitious character of Abimelech, were forcibly presented, and Jotham closed his address with the prediction that Abimelech would yet prove a source of discord and ruin—a prediction which the sequel shows was remarkably fulfilled. The remonstrance of Jotham did not at the time produce any effect. For three years Abimelech “reigned over Israel,” his rule, which commenced at Shechem, having been gradually extended over adjacent towns and territories. But at the end of three years the sin of Abimelech began to find its punishment; his subjects became dissatisfied; and the men of Shechem, who had been the first to support his claims, even formed a plan to assassinate him. Just at this crisis, when disaffection had become open revolt, one Gaal, the son of Ebed, a bold and ambitious man, contrived, with the assistance of a strong party of relatives, to insinuate himself into the confidence of the men of Shechem and to assume the leadership. Gaal protected the people in their agricultural labours, promoted a spirit of mirth and dissipation, and led them to heap reproaches upon the name of Abimelech. Abimelech was absent from Shechem, but Zebul, his officer, communicated to him the threats of Gaal and his companions, and the measures which had been adopted to exclude him from the sovereignty. By forced marches all night Abimelech hastened to Shechem, and invested the city in four companies. Gaal went out to meet him, but was defeated. The next day the attack was renewed, but with the same result. Zebul therefore procured the expulsion of Gaal; Abimelech pressed into the

gates, carried the place, and utterly destroyed it. A thousand of the inhabitants who had taken refuge in the tower of Shechem were consumed in the burning of that tower, and the inhabitants of the town were put to death with merciless barbarity. Abimelech sowed the city with salt, in token that he designed it to become a perpetual desolation. But when Abimelech attempted to fire the tower of Thebez, whose inhabitants had also revolted, a woman threw a piece of a millstone from the wall upon his head, "and all to break his skull." His skull was fractured, and he had only time to desire his armour-bearer to despatch him, that he might escape the dishonour of so ignominious a death. Thus the fratricide Abimelech and the unprincipled people of Shechem were punished for their crimes: upon both "came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal." When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead they dispersed, and the civil commotion subsided.

THE JUDGESHIPS OF TOLA AND JAIR.—The Israelites were now freed from the tyranny of Abimelech, but they were still liable to annoyance and incursions from the neighbouring powers. They needed one to deliver them from idolatry and corruption, to repress internal discord, maintain union, and guard against assaults from without. Tola, of the tribe of Issachar, was appointed judge, and for twenty-three years he controlled the fortunes of Israel. No details of his reign are left, but his war against evil was not unsuccessful.

The administration of Jair followed that of Tola, and continued for twenty-two years. Jair seems to have been intent upon the aggrandisement of his own family, and to have aimed at much magnificence and outward display. "He had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had

thirty cities." But, on the whole, the rule of these two judges was probably characterised by much peace and prosperity.

THE OPPRESSION BY THE AMMONITES.—"The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord," and the apostasy this time was very gross and aggravated. The Israelites became almost universal idolaters, adopting the gods of the surrounding nations, and scarcely acknowledging Jehovah at all as one of the gods they worshipped. As was to be expected in such circumstances, "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon." They had two hostile nations on either side of them, the Philistines on the west and the Ammonites on the east, so that the oppression would be specially severe. This condition of things lasted eighteen years, "so that Israel was sore distressed." Punishment, as on former occasions, led to conviction and contrition; and, deeply humbled for their sins, they cried unto the Lord, and confessed their great sin. God upbraided them with the number of deliverances already vouchsafed, and referred them for help to the gods whom they had chosen to serve. But the Israelites were now truly penitent; "they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord," and then God grieved for their affliction. And when the children of Ammon were encamped in Gilead and the children of Israel, now reinstated in Jehovah's favour, were encamped opposite, in Mizpeh, it was felt that only an earnest and resolute leader was required to enable them to throw off the oppression under which they groaned.

A deliverer soon appeared in the person of **Jephthah**, a Gileadite. Jephthah was an illegitimate son, and, therefore,

like Abimelech, could not share in the inheritance with the legitimate children, who at their father's death expelled him from their home and their society. Jephthah took up his residence in the land of Tob, and gathered round him a number of idle foolish men. When the Ammonites sought an occasion of war, the Gileadites sent their chiefs to solicit Jephthah, who had become noted for his prowess, to lead their forces. Jephthah reminded them of their former unkindness in turning him out of their city—but at length agreed to accept the command on condition that the government should be conferred upon him in case of success, an arrangement which was solemnly ratified by the congregation assembled at Mizpeh. His first measure was to send an embassy to the King of Ammon to demand an explanation of the cause of his hostility, to which an answer was returned, intimating his title to the land of which he had been unjustly deprived during the journey of the Israelites from Egypt. Jephthah replied to this that the Ammonites, who were the original proprietors of the country, had been dispossessed by the successful arms of his ancestors, in consequence of their refusal to allow the Israelites to pass through it, and that the right to the continued possession of what conquest had conferred upon them—a conquest, too, obtained under the special direction of heaven—had never been disputed until his unwarrantable invasion, for the period of 300 years. But “the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah,” being resolved to prosecute the war. **Jephthah**, therefore, immediately made the necessary arrangements under divine direction; and, according to the religious custom of the times, **pledged himself in a vow to God that if he should be favoured with success whatever came**

forth of the doors of his house to meet him upon his return should be devoted to the Lord as a burnt offering. His most sanguine expectations were accomplished in a complete victory over the enemy, whom he smote "with a very great slaughter." "Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel."

Upon his return to his house at Mizpeh, Jephthah had cause bitterly to lament his rash and improper vow. His daughter, an only child, came out at the head of a choir of maidens to offer him joyful congratulations on his success. This changed his exultation into deepest grief. His daughter had innocently become a source of unspeakable distress. He had solemnly vowed and could not recall the vow. With generous self-devotion and heroism the youthful maiden concurred in it, and after a season of retirement for two months, during which she, with her companions, bewailed her enforced virginity, "her father did with her according to his vow." But whether she was actually offered up as a burnt-offering in order literally to fulfil the vow, or was only devoted to a life of celibacy and seclusion, it is scarcely possible to decide with any degree of confidence.

After these transactions a disturbance of a different nature unexpectedly arose, from the resentful feelings of the Ephraimites. The tribe of Ephraim possessed a haughty and turbulent disposition, and was exceedingly jealous of the power and honour enjoyed by the tribe of Manasseh. It now fancied itself neglected in the summons which had been issued to unite against the late invaders of the country, and it threatened to set the house of Jephthah on fire, in order to revenge the insult. Jephthah's answer to the challenge

sent by the men of Ephraim was at once firm and temperate, pointing out that they had been called but had refused to come. Finding his remonstrances vain and the Ephraimites intent upon a quarrel, Jephthah resorted to arms, conquered them in battle, and, at the fords of Jordan, where the Ephraimites endeavoured to cross over into their own country, put immense numbers of them to death. No fewer than 42,000 perished on that fatal day. **The inability of a fugitive to pronounce Shibboleth accurately, proved him to be an Ephraimite, and ensured his immediate destruction.** With such signal revenge was the tribe of Ephraim punished. After an honourable administration of public affairs for six years, Jephthah died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

THE JUDGESHIPS OF IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON.—Jephthah's victory over the enemies of Israel was followed by twenty-five years of comparative peace and comfort. Of this period Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel seven years, Elon of Zebulun ten years, and Abdon of Pirathon in the land of Ephraim eight years.

THE OPPRESSION OF THE PHILISTINES.—We enter on another period of sin and recovery. It is the last occasion of the kind recorded in the Book of Judges. Again the Israelites apostatized from the pure worship of God and fell into idolatry. In consequence of this defection they were delivered up to the oppression of the Philistines, and this oppression continued forty years. The Philistines were not numerous—they had only five cities of any size—but they were frequently a terrible scourge to the Israelites. Once more a deliverer was raised up, and this time he was one of

a singular character. The circumstances of his birth, the course of his life, and the manner of his death are all extraordinary. **The name of Samson** is one of the most remarkable in Scripture history.

Samson was the son of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan. His mother for a long time had no family, but was at length visited by "the angel of the Lord," who assured her that her barrenness should be removed. As the child, she was to have, was to be a Nazarite from the womb, she received directions respecting her own mode of living and the consecration of her future son. When this pleasing intelligence was communicated to her husband he entreated the Lord to permit a renewal of the angel's visit, and his prayer was graciously answered. While the woman was in the field "the angel of God" again appeared to her. She went in search of Manoah, and to him the same injunctions were repeated as had been given previously to his wife. The words of the promise and the true dignity of the angel were discovered by his miraculous disappearance in the flame of the meat offering which Manoah prepared. When Manoah was fully convinced of the real character of the stranger with whom he had been conversing, he feared that both he and his wife must die, "because we have seen God," but this fear was dispelled by the very natural argument of his wife, that God would not have conferred such singular honour upon them in accepting their burnt offering and giving them such gracious promises, if he intended to kill them.

In due time the promised child was born, and was called Samson. As he grew up, abundant evidence was furnished that he was under the special protection of God, and was

designated to accomplish some great work. The Spirit of the Lord had stirred him up to give astonishing proofs of his valour and strength, and inspired him, in view of the degraded bondage of his countrymen, with an ardent zeal to do something for their deliverance. The spiritual character of Samson was by no means high, but his exhibitions of physical strength are quite unique in Scriptural history. About a dozen examples of his courage and strength are given. When on a journey to Timnath, to visit a Philistine woman with whom he had fallen in love, a young lion threatened to attack him, but by heavenly help imparted to him, "he rent it as he would have rent a kid." Samson's parents endeavoured to dissuade him from forming a connection with the enemies of Israel, but in vain. Samson entertained a genuine affection for this woman, and in what he did he was guided by the Divine Spirit. Through his marriage with her, an occasion of avenging the wrongs inflicted by the Philistines would be obtained. When some time afterwards Samson returned to Timnath to consummate the marriage, which had been duly arranged for, he found a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion he had slain. He took the honey and shared it with his father and mother. At the wedding feast the incident formed the theme of a riddle, "**Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.**" **For seven days the young men who had been associated with Samson endeavoured to solve his riddle, but did not succeed.** They, however, under severe threatening, compelled his wife to try and obtain the secret from him. Her urgent entreaties were successful, so that by the time appointed the answer was returned. By treachery, and the assistance of his wife, the knowledge had been gained, so

Samson replied, "If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." "Thirty sheets and thirty change of garments" was the condition of success or failure on either side, and as the riddle had been answered, Samson went down to Ashkelon, another city of the Philistines, twenty miles west of Timnath, slew thirty men, and, despoiling them, duly paid his forfeit. But his wife had, by what she had done, sacrificed all future claims on his regard, and she was given in marriage to another, with whom Samson had been upon intimate terms. The ill-assorted marriage was now at an end, and Samson became the inveterate enemy of the Philistines, taking signal vengeance upon them for the loss of his wife. Sternly refusing the offer of his wife's sister, he prepared to resent the injury done to him upon the Philistines, whom he regarded as the secret contrivers of that injury. Having procured 300 foxes, he fastened them tail to tail, in couples, placed a lighted firebrand between each couple, and then turned them into the cornfields, which, with the vines and olive trees, were set on fire. As soon as the Philistines discovered the author of this mischief, they retaliated by burning his father-in-law and wife in their house—an awful retribution, but remarkable from the fact that, by her unprincipled conduct Samson's wife exposed herself to the very doom which, at the sacrifice of fidelity to her husband, she had tried to escape. This act provoked Samson to fresh and eager resentment, and he inflicted terrible slaughter upon them—"smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter." After this victory he retreated to the rock Etam, in the tribe of Judah, and took up his residence on its summit; but the Philistines, being determined to avenge themselves, collected a considerable force, and demanded of the people that they should deliver him up.

The degraded Israelites, probably afraid of the consequences of a refusal, sent 3,000 men, first to expostulate, and then to seize upon him. Samson readily yielded himself up on condition that they, his own countrymen, should not personally interfere in the quarrel and fall upon him themselves. He was accordingly bound with two new cords, and taken to the encampment of the Philistines. The Philistines exulted with joy at the prospect of speedy riddance from so formidable an enemy, but their triumph was turned into discomfiture when Samson, by the sudden inspiration of the Divine Spirit, snapped asunder the cords with which he had been bound, and laying hold of "a new jawbone of an ass," with no other weapon, "slew a thousand men therewith." The humour of the hero does not forsake him even in the exultation or the weariness of victory, and he commemorates the incident in the saying, "**With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.**" And the place where the incident occurred received henceforth the name "Ramath-lehi," *i.e.*, the hill of the jawbone. Samson's strength was exhausted by the violent and long-continued exertion, but he was refreshed by a miraculous supply of water, gained in answer to prayer. The spring of water received the name "En-hakkore," *i.e.*, the well of him who prayed.

Some time after the above event Samson entered Gaza, one of the cities of the Philistines, and lodged in a house of public entertainment. It soon transpired that he was there, and the Philistines, in order to secure him, placed a guard round the house and at the city gates to prevent his escape. Deeming themselves certain of their prey, the inhabitants deferred the execution of their intention till the following morning, but Samson, rising at midnight, cleverly outwitted

the Philistine watchmen by carrying off gates, posts, bars, and chains, to the top of a hill near to Hebron—about twenty miles off. Doubtless the watchmen were paralyzed with astonishment at the display of such superhuman strength.

The next adventure exhibits Samson in a very unfavourable light, and was the indirect occasion of his death. He fell in love with a woman named **Delilah**, who lived in the vale of Sorek, near to Eschol. Her mercenary character and heartless blandishments seem to justify the conclusion that Delilah was a wicked profligate woman, and that Samson had been caught by her snares. The five lords of the Philistines were gratified to hear of the power she had obtained over their powerful enemy, and did not deem it beneath their dignity to bribe her to use that power in promoting their designs. They offered her 5,500 shekels—£1,100 each—upon condition of her ascertaining from him the source of his extraordinary strength, and how it might be overcome. Delilah undertook the service, and made several attempts, plying all the arts of persuasion and blandishment to extract the secret, but his foolish enemies fell into trap after trap, as if only to give their conqueror amusement. Samson was bound with seven green withs, but they were broken “as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire; he was bound with new ropes, but he brake them from off his arms like a thread,” the seven locks of his hair were plaited with a web, but on his awakening from sleep to defend himself from his enemies, “he went away with the pin of the beam and with the web”—*i.e.*, the whole weaving apparatus to which he had been attached. At length, however, by incessant importunity, Delilah discovered the important secret. The strength of Samson arose from his peculiar relation to God as a Nazarite, and

his unshorn locks were an outward symbol of his vows and a pledge on the part of God for the continuance of super-human strength.

When Delilah "pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man."

Delilah perceived that the secret was at last obtained; she sent a message in all haste to the lords of the Philistines, who paid her the price of her treachery; she cut off his hair as he lay asleep upon her lap; and, when she awoke him as before with the words, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," he discovered his weakness and helplessness.

"He wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house."

Samson was now reduced to a position of the deepest degradation and misery. He was a captive, without sight, closely confined and heavily manacled, and compelled to do the work of a slave.

In process of time, as Samson reflected on his folly and wickedness, and was led sincerely to repent, he renewed his Nazarite vows. He again allowed his hair to grow, and his strength seemed to grow with the growth of his hair. We are not informed how long he continued in his ignominious condition. But at length the Philistines, having assembled themselves in great numbers to offer sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to keep a feast of gratitude and triumph for their victory over the Israelites and over Samson, the Hebrew champion, bethought them in the midst of the festivity of their illustrious captive, and, with the view of enhancing the pleasure and glory of the occasion, sent for him that

they might indulge the spirit of ridicule over their humbled foe. The expected sport, however, soon terminated in a terrible calamity. Samson requested the lad who led him about, to allow him to obtain a little relief, by leaning against the two pillars which supported the building. The lad acceded to his request, and, after a fervent prayer "to be avenged of the Philistines for his two eyes," Samson took hold of the pillars, the one with the right hand and the other with the left, and, putting forth the final effort of his gigantic strength, he pulled them from their positions, and so brought down the whole structure to the ground. Upon the roof of the building "there were about three thousand men and women," "the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there." All were now buried in one mighty ruin. It was the last act of his vengeance; Samson died for the cause of his country. Thus ended the strange exploits of twenty years. The awful catastrophe so paralysed the Philistines that they neither attempted to prevent the removal of Samson's body by his relatives nor to molest the Israelites for a long time after. The number Samson had slain at his death was more than the number he had slain in his life. His remains received honourable interment in his father's sepulchre, and, on account of the signal services which by his strength and courage he had rendered to his country, his name lived on as that of the greatest of its champions. In his "Samson Agonistes," the English poet Milton has finely portrayed the grandeur of Samson's prowess and the ignominy of his fall. His subjection to the power of unholy desire prevents us from respecting his character and duly appreciating the importance of his work, but his faith in the presence and power of God seems to have been firm and sincere (Heb. xi., 32).

Samson was the first conqueror of the Philistines—the longest and deadliest enemies of Israel—whose hostilities, commencing at the close of the period of the Judges, did not terminate till the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii., 8). In him the Danites also had contributed to the defence of Israel, and had in some measure seen the fulfilment of Jacob's blessing upon the tribes (Gen. xlix., 16, 17).

A long blank in the sacred History succeeds to the crash of the Philistine temple and the silent burial of Samson in the sepulchre of his native hills, 'between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burial-place of Manoah his father.' Eli, already far advanced in years, is at once Judge and High Priest of Israel, when again in the Book of Samuel the narrative is resumed.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

WHY SO CALLED?—It is so called from the account it gives of the Israelites under the Government of thirteen Judges, after the death of Joshua, from 1426 B.C. to the death of Samson, 1117 B.C., and the time of Eli, a period of about 309 years.

WHO WROTE IT?—**Samuel** is generally considered as the writer, and for the following reasons :—

1. “In **those days** there was **no king** in Israel.” (Judges xvii., 6 ; xxi., 25).

From which passage we must clearly infer that **there was a king** when the account was written. This therefore makes the writer live **after the establishing of a monarchy.**

2. “The Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem **unto this day**” (Judges i., 21).

Jerusalem therefore had not as yet been captured when the account was written. Now, from 2 Sam. v., 6-9, we know that David, as soon as he was acknowledged king by the twelve tribes, marched against Jerusalem and took it, and made it the capital of his kingdom under the name of the “City of David.” Therefore the writer must have lived during the reign of Samuel and first seven years of David’s rule, and we know of no other person living than **Samuel** as likely to have written such an account as that contained in the Book of Judges.

Some have thought that it was not composed before the Babylonian exile, or at all events before the fall of the

kingdom of the ten tribes, and they base their arguments on the passage "**the captivity of the land**," in chap. xviii., 30. Others again suggest the prophets—**Nathan** and **Gad**, or some one under their supervision, as the writer.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK.—The book may be divided into three chief portions.

I. The state of the Israelites after the death of Joshua until they began to turn aside from serving the Lord (chap. i.-iii.).

II. The history of the oppressions of the Israelites, and their deliverances by the Judges (chap. iv.-xvi.).

III. An account of the introduction of idolatry among the Israelites, and the consequent corruption of religion and manners among them, for which God gave them up into the hands of their enemies (chap. xvii.-xxi.).

PROFANE HISTORY.—From the accounts in this book probably originated such ingenious fictions as the story of the **Sabine rape**; of **Nisus' hair**, and the **golden lock** given to Pterelaus by Neptune; that of Hercules and Omphale, of the pillars of Hercules; of the death of Cleomedes Astypalœus; and of Agamemnon and Iphigenia.

REFERENCES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Acts xiii., 20. Hebrews xi., 32, 40.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Whence does the Book derive its name?
2. Who is generally supposed to have written the Book of Judges? Give your reasons. Mention others who have any claim to be considered as the Authors of this Book.
3. What inference would you draw from such expressions as
 - (i.) In those days there was no king in Israel.
 - (ii.) Until the day of the captivity of the land.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS.

The further prosecution of the Conquest of Canaan. Adoni-bezek justly punished. Jerusalem taken. Hebron taken. For the taking of Debir, Othniel hath Achsah for a wife. The Kenites dwell in Judah. Hormah, Gaza, Askelon and Ekron taken. The Acts of Benjamin, of the house of Joseph, who take Bethel—of Zebulun, of Asher, of Naphtali, of Dan.

NOTES.

V 1. “Now after the death of Joshua, it came to pass.” Literally, “and it came to pass,” &c. Compare with this, the opening words of Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, 1 and 2 Samuel, 2 Kings. They are the usual words in Hebrew for the continuation of a narrative.

“**After the death of Joshua.**” These clearly show the purpose of the writer, viz., to continue the history from the point at which it had been left off in the “Book of Joshua.” Just before his death Joshua had set before the tribes the task of completely destroying the Canaanites; this they were to do with the help of the Lord God of Israel; he also pointed out to them the danger of apostasy. Therefore remembering his admonitions and warnings, it was natural that they should inquire, who should lead them against the Canaanites who still remained in the land.

“**Asked the Lord,**” *i.e.*, asked Jehovah. The name **Jehovah** means, the self-existent, *i.e.*, one whose existence can be predicated as an attribute.

“Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites?”

In this passage two questions ought to be asked.

1. What does the relative pronoun “**who**” stand for?
2. What is meant by the words “**go up?**”

It is clear from the answer in the next verse, that the “**who**” stands for a tribe and not a person.

“**Go up**” means “**to fight against,**” and is similarly used in Josh. viii., 3. They are the ordinary words for an aggressive military movement, and most probably have originated from the fact that fortresses, in early days, were usually situated on heights.

V. 2. “Judah shall go up.” Two reasons have been suggested why Judah should have been chosen to commence hostilities.

1. Because it was the most numerous of all the tribes.
2. He had been appointed by the blessing of Jacob to be the champion of his brethren. (Gen. xlix., 18.)

The latter seems most probable.

“I have delivered the land.” “**The land**” is not merely the land allotted to the tribe of Judah (or Judah’s inheritance), but the **land of Canaan** generally, so far as it was still in the possession of the Canaanites and was to be conquered by Judah.

V. 3. “Canaanites.” To the Gentile world these were known as the Phœnicians, the inventors of the letters, the originators of commerce, and patrons of the arts. They were doomed to destruction for their gross licentiousness. (Levit. xviii., 24. ; Deut. ix., 4.)

V. 5. “Bezek” (= *lightning, in chains*). The exact situation of this place is unknown. It is generally supposed to be in the tribe of Judah. It is only mentioned once more,

viz., in 1 Samuel, xi., 8, where it is placed between Gibeah of Saul and Jabesh in Gilead. Now, Gibeah of Saul was not far from Jerusalem, and to the north-east of it.

“Adoni-bezek” (= *the lightning of the Lord, the Lord of Bezek.*) His proper name is unknown. Compare with it Adoni-zedek (= *justice of the Lord, the Lord of Zedek.* Josh. x., 1-27) and Melchizedek (= *king of righteousness.* Heb. vii., 1-2). His probable headquarters was Jerusalem.

V. 6. “And he cut off his thumbs and great toes.”

We must not infer from this, that the Israelites were accustomed to thus mutilate their foes. It was doubtless done, in this case, as an act of retribution on the cruel monarch who had inflicted such cruelties on captives taken by himself. Compare with this incident the Athenians cutting off the thumbs of the captured Aeginetans, so that they might not wield the spear. How far the Israelites were justified in this cruel treatment we cannot tell.

V. 7. “Gathered their meat under my table.” This is a figurative expression to denote the most cruel treatment and humiliation. Compare it with Matthew xv., 27.

V. 8. “Fought against Jerusalem and had taken it.” When we compare with this passage that in 2 Sam. v., 6, there seems to be a discrepancy. However, this is easily removed, if we only carefully consider the following accounts of Jerusalem. In Josh. x., 3, 18, 26, we find that Joshua **slew the king** of Jerusalem and his four allies, after the battle of Gibeon, **but did not conquer Jerusalem**, his capital. This was not done till after Joshua’s death, an account of which we have in this chapter. Even now, it did not come into the sole and permanent possession of the Israelites. For in Judges xix., 11, 12, the city is evidently

considered as foreign by the Israelites. Therefore the Benjamites must have lived side by side with the Jebusites till the city was wrested from them by David (2 Sam. v., 6).

V. 9. "And in the south, and in the valley." Two words are used in Hebrew to designate "the south:" One expressing direction; the other (**Negel**) expressing the physical characteristic of the land. The latter is used here, "**In the valley**," *i.e.*, in the "**shephelah**."

V. 10-15. With a few verbal changes, this is a repetition of Josh. xv., 14-19.

V. 10. "Hebron" (= *society, friendship, enchantment*). This was a city of Judah (Josh. xv., 54), situated among the mountains (Josh. xx., 27), about twenty Roman miles south of Jerusalem, and about the same distance north of Beersheba. It is one of the most ancient cities in the world, still existing; and in this respect, it is the rival of Damascus.

"**The name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba**," (= *the city of Arba*). It was so called from Arba, the father of Anak and progenitor of the giant Anakim (Josh. xxi., 11; xv., 13, 14).

The chief interest of this city arises from its having been the scene of some of the most striking events in the lives of the Patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah were buried near this place.

V. 11. "Debir." This was a town in the mountains of Judah (Josh. xv., 49); one of a group of eleven cities to the west of Hebron.

Its earlier name was Kirjath-sepher (= *the city of the book*), and Kirjath-sannah (= *city of palm*).

“Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.” As this passage stands, it is impossible to say whether Othniel or Kenaz was Caleb’s brother. The former is the usual interpretation. It is just possible that the term **“son of Kenaz”** is equivalent to Kenezite in Josh. xiv., 6, 14.

V. 16. “Moses’ father-in-law.” Rather brother-in-law (*i.e.*, Hobab). The term father-in-law here means any near relation by marriage.

“The city of palm trees” (*i.e.*, Jericho). The modern name is Riha. One of the first cities, on the west of Jordan, taken by the Israelites during the Conquest of Canaan.

“Wilderness of Judah.” This lay between the Hebron range of mountains and the Dead Sea. It was here that John the Baptist preached (Matt. iii., 1).

“Arad.” This was a mountain about twenty miles south of Hebron.

• **V. 17. “Zephath”** (= *which beholds*). This place was in the territory of Simeon, as may be seen from two considerations—

1. It had been allotted to Simeon (see Joshua xix., 4).

2. The meaning of the words, **“Judah went with Simeon his brother,”** is that Judah went with Simeon into his territory to drive out the Canaanites, who were still to be found there.

Hormah (= *utter destruction*). It is derived from the Hebrew word Cherem, which originally meant **“to shut up”** (whence our word Harem). From that it came to mean **“to cause to be shut up,”** thence **“to consecrate,”** and **“to devote to utter destruction,”** **“to place under a ban.”** Notice the case of Jericho.

Compare also the following passages:—Num. xiv., 45 ; xxi., 3. Josh. xii., 14 ; xix., 4. 1 Sam. xxx., 30. 2 Chronicles xiv., 10.

Zephath is the older name of the two, and this is only used here and in 2 Chron. xiv., 10.

V. 18. "Gaza" (= *strong, a goat*). This was the scene of one of Samson's greatest exploits (chap. xvi., 3). It was also one of the five lordships of the Philistines (Joshua xiii., 3). The Israelites could not have held it long, as it was in the possession of the Philistines in the time of Samson and Samuel (chap. xiv., 19 ; xvi., 1 ; 1 Sam. v., 10). This place is also known as **Azzah** (Deut. ii., 23 ; 1 Kings iv., 14 ; Jer. xxv., 20). Its modern name is **Ghazze**.

Askelon (= *weight, balance, fire of infamy*), more properly Ashkelon, known later as Ascalon, now Askalan, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, south-west of Palestine. It also was one of the Philistine lordships, and was famous in the history of the Crusades as having been besieged and taken by Richard I. of England.

Ekron (= *barrenness, torn away*). Another of the Philistine lordships. It fell, by lot, to the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv., 45), but it was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix., 43).

The two remaining lordships were **Ashdod** and **Gath**, which do not appear to have been conquered at this time. Even these which were conquered the Judæans did not hold long, for in the time of Samson they were all in the possession of the Philistines (xiv. 19 ; xvi., 1).

V. 19. "But could not drive out." Some have raised a difficulty with regard to the subject of the verb "**could**."

However, by studying the context, it is clear that its subject is Judah and not the "**Lord**." As long as Judah had faith in the Lord he was successful, but immediately he lost faith, his success was at an end.

"**Chariots of iron.**" What these were is uncertain. They were either composed chiefly of iron, or armed with iron scythes, like those of the Britons. They certainly formed an essential part in the mode of warfare in those times, because even Joshua dreaded them (Josh. xi., 6).

V. 20. "The three sons of Anak." These were Sheshai, Ahiman, Talmai.

V. 21. "Unto this day." This passage has been made use of to fix the date of writing the Book of Judges.

V. 22. "The house of Joseph," *i.e.*, the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh.

"**Bethel**" (= *house of God*). Its modern name is Beetin. It lay on the borders of Ephraim and Benjamin and near Ai. It is noted for the following circumstances :—

1. Abraham encamped here. (Gen. xii., 8.)
2. Jacob's Vision of the Ladder, when on his way to Padan-aram (Gen. xxviii., 19 ; xxxv., 6 ; xlviii., 3).
3. Its inhabitants were engaged in the battle of Ai against Joshua (Joshua viii., 17).

"**Luz**" (= *separation, departure*), or "**Bethel**," was in Benjamin's lot, though Ephraim and Manasseh seemed to have helped the Benjamites in gaining possession of it.

V. 27. "Beth-shean, Taanach, Megiddo," were in Issachar but belonged to Manasseh. They had been assigned to Manasseh on account of the smallness of its own territory (Joshua xvii., 11).

"**Dor**" (now Dandora or Jantura) was in Asher, but belonged to Manasseh.

“**Ibleam**” was in Asher, or Issachar, but belonged to Manasseh. **The ascent of Gur**, the spot at which Ahaziah received his death wound from the soldiers of Jehu, **was at Ibleam** (2 Kings ix., 27).

V. 29. “Gezer” (= *dividing, sentence*). This formed one of the landmarks on the south boundary of Ephraim between the lower Beth-horon and the Mediterranean, the western limit of the tribe. Its king, Horam, or Elam, coming to the assistance of Lachish, was killed with all his people by Joshua (Josh. x., 33 ; xii., 12).

V. 31. “Accho” (= *close, pressed together*), *i.e.*, **Modern Acre**. Situated about ten miles north of Mount Carmel. This city became very famous during the Crusades, and was frequently besieged, as may be seen from the following facts :—

1191 A.D. Taken after a two years' siege by Richard I. of England.

1291 „ Re-taken by the Saracens when 60,000 Christians were either killed or sold as slaves.

1799 A.D. Unsuccessfully besieged by Napoleon Bonaparte.

1832 „ Captured for the Turks by the Egyptians.

1840 „ Retaken by an English fleet.

“**Zidon.**” Called Great Zidon in Josh. xi., 8. Its Hebrew name, “Tsidon,” signifies “Fishing” or “Fishery.” Its modern name is Saida. It is situated in the narrow plain between Lebanon and the sea. Tyre and Zidon were two very influential cities in early times.

“**Aphik.**” Most probably the same as Aphek in Josh. xiii., 4 ; xix., 30. Its present name is Afkah.

V. 32. “But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites.” As seven out of the twenty-two towns of Asher (Josh. xix., 30) remained in the hands of the Canaanites, including such important places as Zidon and Accho, it is

not stated here as in verses 29, 30, "**that the Canaanites dwelt among them**" but that "**the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites,**" thus showing that the Canaanites held the upper hand. For this reason the words "they became tributaries" (verses 30, 35) are also omitted.

V. 33. "Beth-shemesh" (= *The house of the sun*). The place where the sun was worshipped. It was situated in the tribe of Naphtali. (Josh. xix., 38.) It must not be confounded with the Beth-shemesh, the Levitical city, in the tribe of Judah. (Josh. xv., 10; xxi., 16. 1 Sam. vi., 13-20.)

V. 34. "Amorites" (= *Highlanders*). These were the descendants of Hamor, the fourth son of Canaan (Gen. x., 16; xxxiii., 19), and they were one of the most powerful of the Canaanitish tribes. From Josh. xix., 40, we find that the territory allotted to the Danites was almost all in the plain. If they were driven out of this, they were excluded from their inheritance. This pressure, therefore, on the part of the Amorites must have been the reason of the Danites seeking an inheritance in the north. (See chap. xviii.)

V. 35. "Mount Heres" (= *sun mountain*). Some have supposed this to be identical with Ir-shemesh (= *city of the sun*) in Josh. xix., 41.

"Aijalon" (= *deer-ground*). This was in Dan, and is the same as Ajalon (Josh. x., 12). Memorable for the miracle of Joshua in arresting the course of the sun and moon. It was a Levitical city (Josh. xxi., 24).

"The hand of the house of Joseph," i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh, the most powerful of the tribes. They thus seem to have the assistance of their Danish brethren.

V. 36. "The going up to Akrabbim." Called **Maaleh-acrabbim** in Josh. xv., 3; and the "**ascent of Akrabbim**" in Num. xxxiv., 4.

“**Akrabbim**” (= “*scorpion height*”) was one of the sharply projecting line of cliffs south-west of the Dead Sea, which formed the southern boundary of Canaan (Josh. xv., 2, 3).

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why was there no need of a successor to Joshua?
2. Which of the tribes was to take the lead in carrying on the work of Conquest?
3. What reason is there for supposing that Simeon and Judah would naturally act together against a common enemy?
4. Who was the commander in the war waged by Judah and Simeon?
5. What other names had Hebron and Debir? Give their meaning.
6. What do the following words mean: Othniel, Caleb, Hormah, Bethel, Zidon, Beth-shemesh?
7. What may we say about the treatment of Adoni-bezek?
8. Name the lordships of the Philistines which are mentioned in this chapter.
9. Name the three sons of Anak. In what connection are they mentioned in this chapter?
10. Which tribes are meant by the “House of Joseph?” How did they act in the Conquest of Canaan?
11. What caused the Danites to emigrate and seek another inheritance?
12. What do you know of the history of Accho in modern history?
13. Which of the Patriarchs had a remarkable vision at Bethel?
14. What do you know of Samson at Gaza?
15. What peculiarity is there in the conduct of Asher and Naphtali?
16. Explain the following passages:—
 - (i.) Come up with me into my lot, and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot.
 - (ii.) Show us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will show thee mercy.
 - (iii.) As I have done, so God hath requited me.
 - (iv.) But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.
 - (v.) But could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS.

An angel of the Lord rebukes the people at Bochim, for their disobedience in not driving out completely the whole of the Canaanites. The condition of the people after Joshua's death.

NOTES.

"An angel," ought to be **"The angel."** Who is meant by this angel is a question of dispute. Two answers have been offered—

- (i.) That he was the same one as had appeared to Joshua at Gilgal, *i.e.*, "Captain of the Lord's Host," viz., Christ himself.
- (ii.) That he was some earthly messenger or prophet, such as Phinehas or Joshua.

Both these answers have a good deal to be said in their favour. However, the balance of probability, in our opinion, certainly inclines towards the first. We therefore give a few reasons in favour of the first. If he were a prophet he would have been so called. (See chap. vi., 8.) No prophet ever identifies himself so closely with God, as in the present case, but introduces his message with the words, "Thus saith the Lord." (Chap. vi., 8.)

V. 1. "Came up from Gilgal to Bochim."—Which passage clearly establishes a connection between this appearance and that in Josh. v., 13. The Israelites had only just renewed the covenant of circumcision, when the angel appeared to Joshua at Gilgal. They were also about to attack the strong and fortified city of Jericho, by no means an easy task. Thus the angel's appearance to

announce success in their endeavours would be highly greeted. When at Bochim, the Israelites had entered into their inheritance and had disobeyed God's command with regard to the extermination of the Canaanites, the angel therefore appeared in order to reprove them. This reproof was deeply felt by the Israelites.

“**Gilgal**” (= *heap*). It is impossible to state exactly the situation of this place. It must have been either

- (i.) The modern Jiljulieh, near Jericho ; or,
- (ii.) Jilgilia, near Bethel.

“**Bochim**” (= *weeping-place*). Nothing is known of this place except what is here mentioned. So called from the circumstances narrated in this chapter. Some place it near Jerusalem, others near Shiloh.

V. 2. “But ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this ?” The Israelites had disobeyed God in not having carried out His commands, as given in Deut. vii., 2-4 :—

“Thou shalt make no covenant (league) with them. Ye shall destroy their altars.”

These two are specified because they were the ones broken ; the other, **prohibition with regard to intermarriages** with the heathen nations around them, **had not as yet been broken**, though in chapter iii., 6, we hear of this one broken too.

V. 3. “They shall be as thorns in your sides,” literally, “**they shall be to you for sides.**” Reference is here made to Num. xxxiii., 5 :—

“It shall come to pass that those which you let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides.”

It was the announcement of the Lord to carry out this threat that made the people weep.

V. 5. "And they called the name of that place Bochim (*i e.*, weeping). So also the place where Deborah died the "**oak of weeping**," and the place where Egyptians and Hebrews mourned for Jacob "**the mourning of Egypt**."

"And they sacrificed there." It does not follow from this sacrifice that the tabernacle or the ark of the covenant was to be found at Bochim. In any place where the Lord appeared, sacrifices might be offered to Him. See 1 Sam. xiii., 13-14, where Samuel does not blame Saul for offering a sacrifice at that particular place, but for having taken upon himself the priestly office.

V. 8. "The servant of the Lord." This is a special title given to Moses by the Lord himself (Num. xii., 7, 8). It is very rarely applied to others. Joshua and David have borne the title. Joshua was not so called till after his death. As regards David, see title to Psalms xviii., xxxvi., and lxxxix., 20.

V. 9. "Timnath-heres." In Joshua xix., 30, xxiv., 30, it is called Timnath-serah, and was a place in the tribe of Ephraim.

"Hill Gaash." Nothing is known of this hill except what is mentioned in 2 Sam. xxiii., 30; 1 Chron. xi., 32. It was in the tribe of Ephraim.

V. 11. "And the children of Israel." Here begins the narrative of what really did happen after Joshua's death, but of which the first chapter gives no hint.

"Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua. . . But when Joshua was dead . . . the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and forsook the God of their fathers."

After this, from verse 14 to the end, we get a summary of the whole contents of the Book.

“Did evil in the sight of the Lord.” This is the regular phrase for falling into idolatry, throughout the Historical Books ; the opposite phrase being “did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord” (1 Kings xv., 5, 11, &c.). It occurs seven times in the Book of Judges, in connection with the seven apostasies of Israel which drew down upon them the seven servitudes under : 1, Chushan-Rishathaim ; 2, Eglon ; 3, Jabin ; 4, Midian ; 5, Abimelech ; 6, Ammonites ; 7, Philistines.

“Baalim.” This is the plural of Baal (= *Lord* or *Master*), who was the supreme male divinity of the Phœnician and Canaanitish nations. We meet with this word Baal as the component of many compound words in the Bible, *e.g.*, Baal-berith (*Lord of Covenants*), Judges viii., 33 ; ix., 4. Baal-peor (*Lord of Mount Peor*), Num. xxv., 1-3. Baalzebub (*God of flies*), 2 Kings i., 2. Baal-zephon (*Lord of the North*), Exod. xiv., 2-9. The plural form Baalim is by some supposed to refer to the numerous images of the god which were set up and worshipped. By others it is said to denote not the statues but modifications of the divinity itself.

V. 13. “Ashtaroath.” The plural of Astarte, who was their supreme female deity. Astarte is styled the goddess or the abomination of the Zidonians, Zidon being the centre of her worship. She was worshipped by the Israelites under the title of **“Queen of Heaven.”** (Jer. vii., 18 ; xliv., 17.)

V. 15. “Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them.” This passage stands in terrible contrast with that in Joshua i., 9.

“The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” “As the Lord had sworn unto them.”

Though this account coincides exactly with the account of the threatenings in Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., still there is no mention of an oath. The oath, therefore, is simply implied in the words.

V. 16. "The Lord raised up judges." This verse is remarkable for the first introduction of the term **judge**. The **Hebrew for judge (i.e., Shophetim)** is the name applied to the ordinary magistrates. Therefore the term is naturally given to those divinely-appointed rulers of whom this book treats.

The Judges of Israel were extraordinary officers appointed by God, or by the people, to assume the chief authority in great emergencies. Their power only extended over portions of the country, and some of them were even contemporaneous. After they had completed the work for which they had been appointed, they still continued to govern for the rest of their lives. They therefore supplied the want of a regular government. But they had not the power of making laws, or of imposing taxes; they could declare war, and their settlement of causes was final. The office was not hereditary, but there was a tendency in that direction, for Samuel appointed his sons as his successors. Few of them only were raised up for military exploits. Eli and Samuel were not in any sense military men, and it is uncertain whether Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon knew anything of military matters. The only ones directly appointed by God were Gideon and Samson.

The **Hebrew word for judge** is the same as that of the Carthaginian **suffetes**, which we hear of in the time of the Punic wars, and which Livy mentions as corresponding in office to the Roman consuls.

V. 18. "It repented the Lord," *i.e.*, the Lord was moved with compassion, or was grieved, because of their groanings. For a poetical paraphrase of this whole passage see Psalm cvi., 34-45.

V. 22. "I may prove Israel," *i.e.*, to try their fidelity (as God had done in Abraham's case).

Verses 22 and 23 are the historian's explanatory comment on the last words of the Lord's speech in verse 21.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Who is the angel mentioned in verse 1? What are the various opinions held with regard to the interpretation of the passage? Give reasons.

2. In what terms did the angel rebuke the children at "**Bochim**?"

3. Explain the names "**Baalim**" and "**Ashtaroth**."

4. Were the judges civil or military saviours? How were they appointed, and how far did their authority extend?

5. Where is "**Timnath-heres**?" By what other name is this place known?

6. Whom did God make the instruments of His righteous indignation against His people Israel?

7. Give another rendering for the following passages—

(i.) They shall be *as thorns* in your sides.

(ii.) It repented the Lord.

8. Point out passages that are common both to this chapter and Psalm cvi.

9. What are the reasons given for allowing the Canaanites to remain in the land?

10. Explain, with reference to the context—

(i.) They buried him in the borders of his inheritance.

(ii.) That through them I may prove Israel.

(iii.) Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil.

(iv.) Ye have not obeyed my voice : why have ye done this?

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS.

The names of the nations which were left to prove Israel, and their influence over them. Othniel delivers Israel from Chushan-rishathaim, Ehud from Eglon, and Shamgar from the Philistines.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan." Who these were can be gathered from chapter ii., 10, where the writer mentions a generation which knew not the Lord, nor yet the work He had done for Israel. This generation must then have been that one, which had arrived at manhood immediately after the close of the wars with the Canaanites (Josh. xxiii., 17). For they who were survivors of those wars would not need such training, as they would certainly have been well acquainted with the arts of war as carried on in those times.

V. 2. The meaning of this verse is, that the children of Israel might be taught war, at least those who before had not known them—(*i.e.*, wars.)

V. 3. "Five lords of the Philistines." In Hebrew "**the lords**" are called "**Seranim**" (*from seren, a hinge*), which is a title applied exclusively to the Philistines.

"**Philistines**" (= *those that dwell in villages*). This people were of Egyptian origin (Gen. x., 14; Deut. ii., 23; 1 Chron. i., 12), and were closely related to the Caphtorim, who it is believed were Cretans. (Amos ix., 7; Jerem. xlvii., 4.)

“**All the Canaanites and the Sidonians.**” This may mean either the Canaanite population who continued to possess the sea-coast of the Mediterranean, or the various tribes mentioned in chapter i., 21-36.

“**The Hivites**” (= *wickedness*). The descendants of Canaan (Gen. x., 17) who were settled more inland, *i.e.*, from Mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

“**Baal-hermon**” (= *the possessor of destruction or of a thing devoted to God*). This is only another name for Baal-gad, the present Banjas, under Hermon (Josh. xiii., 5).

“**The entering in of Hamath**” (= *anger, heat, a wall*). This was the extreme northern boundary of Canaan (Num. xiii., 21). It was the great approach to Canaan from Babylon and the north (Jer. xxxix., 5). The meaning of the phrase is, “Up to the mouth of the valley which opens out upon Hamath.”

V. 5. The list of tribes given here is the same as that in Exodus xxxiii., 2. In Josh. xxiv., 11, we have the addition of the Girgashites. The word **Canaanites** signifies lowlanders; **Amorites**, highlanders; **Perizzites**, dwellers in the open country; **Hivites**, dwellers in villages; **Jebusites**, threshers.

V. 6. As an example in later times of the influence of these marriages we may mention the marriage of Ahab with Jezebel. (1 Kings xvi., 31-33.)

“There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.” (1 Kings xxi., 25.)

V. 8. “Chushan-rishathaim.” Literally, “**Cush of double wickedness.**” All that we know of this king is what is here recorded.

"Mesopotamia" (= *between two rivers*) is the district between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Hebrew name is Aram-naharaim.

"Served." The servitudes of the Israelites consisted, generally speaking, in having to pay tribute.

V. 9. "Othniel" (= *Lion of God*). The same that smote Debir, and married Caleb's daughter, Achsah.

V. 15. "Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite." Gera, was one of the sons (*i.e.*, descendants) of Benjamin, living at the time of Jacob's migration to Egypt. (Gen. xvi., 21.) He was the son of Bela. (1 Chron. viii., 3.)

"A man, left-handed," literally, **shut as to his right hand.** Therefore it comes to mean that he had not the free use of his right hand. At first sight, this phrase seems to suggest a defect, but when we read of seven hundred chosen men of Benjamin all left-handed, and skilful slingers (chap. xx., 16; 1 Chron. xii., 2), it is obvious that it **was no defect but an acquired art.**

"Sent a present unto Eglon," *i.e.*, paid tribute.

V. 19. "Quarries that were by Gilgal." Gilgal in the immediate neighbourhood of **Jericho.** What these **"quarries"** were is uncertain. In the margin we have **"graven images."** If so, they must have been well known.

V. 25. "Therefore they took a key," literally, **they took an opener.** Probably a wooden instrument with which they either lifted up the latch within, or drew back the wooden bar or bolt.

V. 26. "Seirath" (= *woody district*). This was the common name of a woody and mountainous country. It was situated in the land of Moab, not far from Gilgal and Bethel. With it compare Seir, the home of Esau.

V. 27. "Mountain of Ephraim." This must have meant the mountainous district within the tribe of Ephraim. Shechem was situated in it.

V. 28. "The fords of Jordan by Moab." These were all the fords that could have been used for escape by the Moabites, who had been stationed within the land of Israel; but chiefly they would be those fords near Jericho, at which Joshua would have led the people across.

V. 31. "Shamgar" (*= named a stranger, he is here a stranger*). All that we know of this judge is what we have here, and the notice of him in chap. v., 6. Taking the two together, we find that he was contemporary with Jael, and that he only partially delivered the Israelites from the oppression of the Philistines. He was no doubt of the tribe of Judah or Dan, and his exploits, like those of Samson, must have been purely local. The duration of his judgeship is not mentioned.

"Ox-goad." This was an instrument used by ploughmen in Syria. It was a pole about eight feet long, armed at one end with a sharp spike, and at the other end an iron scraper—the one to spur on the ox at the plough, and the other to detach the earth from the ploughshare.

"He also delivered Israel." This clearly includes Shamgar amongst the Judges of Israel.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Give a list of the nations left in Palestine, whereby God might test the Israelites.
2. Name the judges mentioned in this chapter, and the enemy from whose hands they delivered Israel.
3. What parts of Palestine were occupied by the Canaanites, Sidonians, and Hivites? Give the meanings of these words.
4. What do you know of Mount Ephraim, Hamath, and Seirath?
5. What is recorded as specially qualifying Othniel for his work?

6. Are there any other cases of the same kind recorded?
7. What are the opinions held with regard to Othniel's rule during the forty years of rest?
8. Compare the agents in the second chastisement of Israel with those of the first.
9. Who was the appointed deliverer in the second chastisement? and what bodily peculiarity had he in common with many of his tribe?
10. What stratagem did Ehud employ? and what are we to say in justification of his act?
11. What things do we miss being said of Shamgar? How do we manage to supply this? Mention the passage your information is obtained from.
12. Who were the Philistines, where did they dwell, and what were their chief lordships?
13. Give the geographical position of Baal-hermon, Hamath, Mesopotamia, Gilgal, Mount Ephraim, Jericho.
14. Explain with reference to context—
 - (i.) The entering in of Hamath.
 - (ii.) Sent a present unto Eglon.
 - (iii.) Quarries that were by Gilgal.
 - (iv.) And his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim.
 - (v.) A Benjamite, a man left-handed.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS.

Deborah and Barak deliver the Israelites from Jabin and Sisera. Jael killeth Sisera.

NOTES.

V. 2. "Jabin" (= *the wise*). This seems to have been a standing name or title among the kings of Hazor, in the same manner as Pharaoh was among the kings of Egypt. For Joshua had already conquered one King of Hazor, called Jabin, and had also taken his capital (Josh. xi., 1-10).

“**Hazor**” (= *fort or castle*) was once the capital of the kingdoms of northern Canaan, and was situated in the tribe of Naphtali, to the north of the waters of Merom (now called Lake Huleh) (Josh. xi., 1-5).

“**Harosheth**” (= *workmanship, cutting or carving*). The site of this place is unknown, but the addition of the Gentiles marks it as “**in Galilee of the nations**” (Gen. xiv., 1; Isaiah ix., 1). It is called “**Harosheth of the Gentiles**” (or nations), because occupied by the unconquered Canaanites. Some travellers identify it with the modern Haroshieth, which is situated north-west of the plain of Esdraelon.

“**Sisera**” (= *that sees a horse*). The name Sisera is found in Ezra ii., 53; Neh. vii., 55, as the ancestor of a family of the Nethiim, who were foreign servants of the Levites.

“**Deborah**” (= *bee*). A female ruler in Israel was an extraordinary circumstance, and we have only one other instance of it, viz., the foreign usurper **Athaliah**. She was also a prophetess like **Miriam** (Exod. xv., 20), **Huldah** (2 Kings xxii., 14), **Isaiah's wife** (Isaiah viii., 3), **Noadiah** (Neh. vi., 14), **Anna and Philip's daughters** (Luke ii., 36). In some respects **Deborah resembled Miriam**. Each was a prophetess, and each sang a triumphant song of victory, but they differed, in that Deborah was a judge and the inspired leader of the Israelites in war, but Miriam only took the lead in thanksgiving to God for His mercies towards Israel in delivering them from the Egyptians. Deborah delivering Israel cannot but remind us of **Joan of Arc** coming to the deliverance of France.

V. 4. “Lapidoth” (= *fire brands, lamps, or flames*). This name only occurs here.

V. 5. "Ramah" (= *a hill*), now called er-Râm, was situated about five miles from Jerusalem.

"Bethel." See note on chapter i., 22.

V. 6. "Barak" (= *lightning*). An appropriate name for a warrior, whose sword flashed as quickly as lightning. This name afterwards reappears amongst the warriors of Carthage. The surname of **Hamilcar** and **Hannibal** was Barca or Barcas (= *fulmen belli*). With this compare also the name **"Boanerges"** (= *sons of thunder*) given to **James and John** (Mark iii., 17).

"Kedesh-naphtali." It was situated about five miles north-west of the Waters of Merom, and so called to distinguish it from Kedesh, to the south of Judah. Its modern name is Kades. It was a city of refuge, and one of the cities of the Levites, and also called in the Book of Joshua **Kedesh in Galilee**, in Mount Naphtali (Josh. xx., 7).

V. 7. "The river Kishon" (= *serpentine*). Rather the brook or stream. The Kishon was so called from its winding course. Its bed in many cases was dry in summer, but a rushing stream in winter. Its source was near **Mounts Tabor and Gilboa**, and it emptied itself into the Mediterranean Sea at the foot of Mount Carmel.

V. 8. Barak like **Gideon** (vi., 15, 36-40), **Abraham** (Gen. xv., 2, 3), **Moses** (Exod. iv., 10), **Peter** (Matt. xiv., 30, 31), exhibited some weakness of faith at first.

V. 11. This **migration of Heber** from the south of Judah to the north of Naphtali must have recently taken place, since Jael was Heber's wife.

"Hobab," father-in-law of Moses, *i.e.*, brother-in-law.

“Unto the plain of Zaanaim.” Rather unto the oak (or teberinth tree) in **Zaanaim**. Notice that single trees in the Bible often serve as a sufficient landmark. Its situation was somewhere near Kedesh-naphtali.

V. 15. “The Lord discomfited Sisera.” In chap. v., 20-21, we read that **“The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away.”** The word **“discomfit”** means **“to part asunder”** (*i.e.*, destroy). Josephus (*Ant.* v., 5) states that a hailstorm came on, which unstrung the bows and slings of the Canaanites, and benumbed them with cold. Some of the results of the swelling of the Kishon in Barak’s time, were reproduced in the battle of Mount Tabor, 1799, when many of the fugitive Turks were drowned.

V. 17. “To the tent of Jael.” From Gen. xxiv. we learn women had separate tents from those of their husbands. Why Sisera chose Jael’s tent has been explained thus:—According to Eastern customs, strange men were never allowed to enter a woman’s tent. Hence, if Sisera was permitted in his urgent need to enter Jael’s tent he would be perfectly safe. Though this was the custom, still, Sisera did not feel secure. In a case like this he thought that suspicion might arise and questions might be asked. So he gives instructions to Jael with regard to her answers.

V. 20. “No.” The pursuers would have been obliged to accept her answer, as it would be contrary to usage to search her tent.

V. 21. “A nail.” Rather the tent pin or peg, *i.e.*, the nail or peg with which the tent was fastened. It may have been of iron or of wood.

Jael's conduct. Many have supposed that Jael, in committing this act of violence, was only fulfilling Deborah's words, "**For the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman**" (chap. iv., 9). Therefore these conclude that she (Jael) was actuated by some divine and hidden influence. However, when the murder is examined and tested by our present standard of morals, it will appear very hideous indeed, and there is not the slightest necessity for Christians to defend it.

Here, we have a fugitive asking and receiving protection at a woman's hands,—he was miserable, defeated, and weary,—he was the ally of her husband,—he was her trusted and honoured guest,—he was in the woman's tent,—above all, he was confiding, defenceless, and asleep;—yet Jael broke her pledge, violated her solemn hospitality, and murdered an unprotected slumberer. Surely we require more positive statements than we have in order to show that Jael was instigated to such a murder by divine suggestion. Deborah's statement that she (Jael) was blessed above women (Judges v., 24) does not justify the act in any way, as Deborah might not have looked at the moral aspect of the question.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Who was the oppressor after Ehud?
2. Of what earlier history are we reminded by the names of the oppressor and his city?
3. What is there striking in Deborah's character, and give other instances in Bible History of women exercising extraordinary influence over their fellow countrymen?
4. How far did Barak rely upon Deborah, and with what result?
5. Who succeeded Shamgar?
6. What do we know of Heber and his wife?

7. Can you assign any reason for Sisera seeking protection in the house of Heber ?

8. Mention the precautions which Sisera desired Jael to take after receiving him to her tent.

9. What suppositions have been made to explain or justify Jael's conduct in committing such a heinous crime ?

10. Give the geographical position of Hazor, Harosheth, Ramah, Kishon, Zaanaim, Bethel, and give their meanings.

11. What is the meaning of the word Barak ? Mention other instances of men being named after their character.

12. When, and by whom, were the following words spoken ?

- (i.) I will deliver him into thine hand.
- (ii.) If thou wilt go with me, then I will go.
- (iii.) The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.
- (iv.) Thou shalt say, No.
- (v.) Turn in my Lord, turn in to me.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS.

The Song of Deborah.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Then sang Deborah." This song of Deborah may be divided into three parts, of nine verses each, and each of these parts may be again divided into three subdivisions, of three verses each.

I. (Verses 3-11). In this we have a **description of the victory**, in which she notices—

- (a) The glorious time when Israel was exalted as the nation of the Lord (verses 3-5).
- (b) The disgraceful decline in more recent times (verses 6-8).
- (c) The joyful turn of affairs which followed Deborah's appearance (verses 9-11).

II. (Verses 13-21). Here we have a **description of the conflict and result**, and notices—

- (a) Of the mighty gathering of the brave to battle (verses 13-15).
- (b) Of the cowardice of those who stayed away from the battle and of the bravery of those who fought (verses 15-18).
- (c) Of the result of the conflict.

III. (Verses 22-31). The glorious **issue of the battle**, with notices—

- (a) Of the flight and pursuit of the enemy (verses 22-24).
- (b) Of the murder of Sisera by Jael (verses 24-27).
- (c) Of the scornful disappointment of Sisera's mother (verses 28-30).

The song closes with an expression of hope that all the enemies of the Lord might perish and Israel increase in strength.

V. 2. A better rendering of this verse is "**For the leading of the leaders in Israel (or the princes), for the willingness of the people (to follow them), bless ye the Lord.**"

V. 4. "Seir" (= *hairy, shaggy*). A mountain range stretching from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic gulf. Abode of the Edomites.

"When thou wentest out of Seir." Clearly referring to the triumph of the Israelites—when they were on their march to Canaan—over Sihon, Og, and the Midianites. The march against those enemies started from Kedesh in the neighbourhood of Seir.

V. 5. "Sinai" (= *bush of the Lord*). A part of the Horeb range of mountains, in Arabia Petræa, between the two northern arms of the Red Sea.

V. 6. "Shamgar and Jael." See note in chapters iii. and iv. Notice in this verse, Shamgar is spoken of as living in the times of Jael. It has been suggested by some that this Jael is some other person than Heber's wife; however for this opinion there are no good reasons.

V. 7. "The inhabitants of the villages ceased." Two views may be taken of this passage, according to the translation we adopt.

- (i.) To take the translation as it stands. Hence the meaning would be: That the towns and villages were as forsaken and desolate as the public highways mentioned in the previous verse.
- (ii.) To adopt the modern translation, viz: The princes (or magistrates) ceased in Israel. The meaning then would be that there was no one to do justice in the gate or to defend them from their oppressors.

V. 8. "Was there a shield." Some interpret this passage—that the Israelites had been so reduced that they were not in possession of arms, similar to their condition under the Philistines as described in 1 Sam. xiii., 22. However, this could hardly be the case, as they fought afterwards the battle of Mount Tabor. The meaning is that their condition was such that **they dared not display them** in any way.

V. 12. "Lead thy captivity captive." The word captivity here means "those led into captivity." See also Ps. lxviii.

V. 14. "Machir" (= *he that sells or knows*). Machir was the son of Manasseh. Hence it here means out of the tribe of Manasseh came down governors. This verse may be rendered thus: "**Of Ephraim came down those whose**

root is in Mount Amalek; after thee (O Ephraim) came Benjamin amongst thy people; of Manasseh there came down the chiefs, and of Zebulon they that handle the staff of the officer."

"**The pen of the writer.**" The Hebrew word here rendered "writer" denotes the officer whose duty it was, like that of the Roman Tribunes, to keep the muster roll and superintend the recruiting of the army.

V. 17. "Gilead" (= *the mass of testimony*). The land of Gilead, on the east of Jordan, was divided between Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh, who are both comprehended here.

"**And abode in his breaches.**" Rather in his **creeks**, *i.e.*, places where the sea breaks in upon the land.

V. 18. "Jeoparded their lives," *i.e.*, despised or put little value upon their lives. It corresponds to our phrase "**contempt of life.**"

V. 19. "Taanach and Megiddo." See note chap. i., 27.

V. 21. "Kishon." See note, chap. iv., 7.

V. 23. "Meroz" (= *secret, leanness*). The real position of this place is not known, but it must have been near the Kishon, and is generally represented as within the tribe of Issachar.

V. 30. "A prey of divers colours." Compare with this, the Babylonish garment taken by Achan at Jericho.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What is the general purport of Deborah's song?
2. Into how many parts may it be divided?
3. What tribes are mentioned in this song as having taken part in the war against Jabin?

4. What do you understand by Machir ?
5. What tribes are omitted by Deborah in this song ?
6. Why was Meroz cursed ?
7. What are the concluding words of this remarkable song ?
8. What parallels to Deborah's song are there found in Scripture ?
9. Of what person in modern history does the deliverance by Deborah remind us ?
10. Explain the allusions :—
 - (i.) Jeopardied their lives unto death in the high places of the field.
 - (ii.) That I arose, a mother in Israel.
 - (iii.) Lead thy captivity captive.
 - (iv.) They that handle the pen of the writer.
 - (v.) And abode in his breaches.
 - (vi.) Why tarry the wheels of his chariots ?

CHAPTER VI.

ANALYSIS.

On account of their sins, the Israelites are oppressed by the Midianites. A prophet rebuketh them. Gideon is commissioned from God to deliver them. Gideon's present is consumed with fire. The destruction of Baal's altar. Joash defendeth his son and calleth him Jerubbaal. The signs of Gideon.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Into the hand of Midian seven years." The tribe of Midian were the descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham by his wife Keturah (Gen. xxv., 2). In chap. viii., 24, they are called Ishmaelites. Their territory extended from beyond Edom to the borders of Moab, on the south of the Dead Sea. They were remarkable not only for the vast number of their cattle (v. 5), but also for their great wealth.

V. 2. "Dens." These were mountain ravines hollowed out by the torrents, and the Israelites made these into hiding-places, not only for themselves, but for their goods and necessary supplies; for the Midianites, like modern Bedouins, thought far more of robbing, plundering, and laying waste the land, than killing the people. Compare with this what is said in Herodotus of the King Alyattes in the war against the Milesians.

V. 4. "Till thou come unto Gaza." Gaza is the extreme limit, towards the south, of the Israelitish territory (1 Kings iv., 24). It appears from v. 33 that the Midianites crossed the Jordan by the fords near Bethshean.

V. 5. "And they came as grasshoppers for multitude." Literally, "according to the abundance of locusts for multitude." The word grasshopper in this passage does not convey the right meaning. The writer wants to impress on us, not the number of the Midianites, &c., but the devastation that resulted from their invasion. Locusts therefore would have been a better word.

V. 8. "Sent a prophet." The name of this prophet is not mentioned. We have other instances in the Bible of prophets being mentioned without giving their names, viz., 1 Kings xx., 13, 35; 2 Kings ix., 1, 4. The message of this prophet is very much the same as that of the angel in chap. ii., 1-3. The word **prophet means originally** one who speaks, by a divine impulse, in strong and vehement words.

V. 9. "Amorites" (= *highlanders*). Here the Canaanitish tribes generally, as the words "in whose land ye dwell" clearly show.

V. 10. "An angel of the Lord." Rather "**The angel of the Lord.**" This would be no other than Christ anticipating His incarnation. He is called Lord in verses 14, 16.

V. 11. "An oak," *lit.*, "**The oak,**" thus showing that it was a well-known tree in the writer's time.

"Ophrah" (= *fawn*). This was a village or farm belonging to Joash, the father of Gideon, and it was situated probably in Manasseh, west of Jordan (v. 18), and not far distant from Shechem (ix., 1, 5). Called "City of Gideon" in viii., 27. There was another Ophrah in Benjamin.

"Abiezrite," *i.e.*, of the family of Abiezer (or Jeezer in Num. xxvi., 30). Abiezer (= *father of help*) was one of the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

"Gideon" (= *destroyer, hewer*). The call of Gideon to take the lead in Israel, his diffidence, and the need for pressure and promises from God, cannot but remind us of the call of Moses in Ex. iii. and iv. **Called also Jerubbaal.**

V. 12. "Thou mighty man of valour." Only known as such to the Lord, to whom the future is as known as the past.

V. 13. In this, notice particularly, Gideon's doubting.

V. 14. Notice here the change from "the angel" to the "Lord himself."

V. 15. "My family is poor," *lit.*, **My thousand is the meanest.** Family or thousand corresponds to the "**hundred**" of our Saxon and English forefathers.

"My father's house." The father's house was a subdivision of the family or thousand.

With this verse compare the case of Moses (Exod. iii., 1), **"Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?"** And also that of Saul, the first King of Israel (1 Sam. ix., 21), **"And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?"**

V. 17. Notice the doubting of Gideon.

V. 18. "Present," *i.e.*, meat-offering.

V. 19. "Ephah." In English dry measure this would be equivalent to about a bushel. It was the quantity of flour used at one baking. An ephah = 3 seahs = 10 omers. An omer was the daily quantity of manna allowed for each person when in the wilderness.

V. 21. "The staff." His appearance was that of a traveller. With this appearance to Gideon compare the three angels appearing to Abraham (Gen. xviii.) at Mamre. They are alike, insomuch that in each food is brought before them. They differ, in that, the three angels who appeared to Abraham partook of the food set before them; in this case, the angel did not partake.

V. 22. "I have seen an angel of the Lord." Compare with this passage that in Gen. xxxii., 30: **"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face."** It was a common notion among the Jews, that to see God in any form was fatal, arising no doubt from the passage in Exod. xxxiii., 20: **"For there shall no man see me and live."** In addition to these notice also the case of Manoah (chap. xiii., 12): **"We shall surely die because we have seen God."**

V. 24. "Gideon built an altar," not to sacrifice upon, but **as a memorial** of the words of peace spoken by the angel. This may be inferred from the name **Jehovah-shalom** (= *Jehovah in peace*). Compare with this, Moses naming an altar **Jehovah-nissi** (= *the Lord is my banner*), in order to commemorate the defeat of the Amalekites (Exod. xvii., 15).

V. 25. "The grove" should be the **Asherah**—*i.e.*, the wooden image of Astarte.

V. 26. "In the ordered place"—*i.e.*, in conformity with the injunctions of the law as given in Exod. xx., 24-26.

"Men of the city." By these are meant probably a remnant of the Canaanitish population, who were the special patrons of Baal-worship at Ophrah.

V. 31. "Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him?" Rather, **Are ye striving for Baal? Would ye save him?** The stress must be put on the word "ye."

V. 32. "Jerubbaal" (= *Baal's adversary*), *i.e.*, Gideon. He is called also (2 Sam. xi., 21) **Jerub-besheth** (= *Shame's adversary*), Baal being Israel's shame.

V. 33. "Valley of Jezreel" (or Esdraelon). This valley runs from the foot of Mount Carmel to that of Mount Tabor, where it divides into three parts, the first passing between Mount Tabor and Little Hermon northwards, the second by Mount Gilboa, and the third runs into the Jordan valley by Beth-shean. The last would be the route of the Israelites. This plain has been aptly described as the "battle-field of Palestine."

V. 35. "Issachar" is not mentioned here, because they could render no assistance, being already surrounded by the Midianites.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. State the character of the destruction caused by the Midianites in Palestine.
2. Who was appointed to deliver the Israelites from the Midianitish oppression ?
3. What encouraging sign was given to Gideon, when the angel appeared the first time ?
4. Where did Gideon build an altar ? What name did he give to it Give the meaning of the word.
5. What names had Gideon besides his ordinary one ? Give the full meaning of each.
6. Relate the sign of the fleece of wool by which Gideon's faith was strengthened.
7. What doubt existed in Gideon's mind as to the appearance of the angel, and how was it removed ?
8. To what extent did the tribes support Gideon ?
9. Give the geographical position of Ophrah, Gaza, Valley of Jezreel, and with what events are they connected.
10. Give the text of the verses in which Gideon has shown a want of confidence. Mention other instances in the Bible of doubting the message of an angel, and state the result thereof.
11. What is the origin of the idea that to see God must be fatal to man ?
12. State the occasion when the following words were uttered, and give their meaning :—
 - (i.) They came as grasshoppers.
 - (ii.) But ye have not obeyed my voice.
 - (iii.) The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.
 - (iv.) Unto this day it is yet in Ophrah, of the Abiezerites.
 - (v.) And I will speak but this once.

CHAPTER VII.

ANALYSIS.

The reduction of Gideon's army from 30,000 to 300. He is encouraged by the dream and interpretation of the barley cake. His stratagem of trumpets and lamps in pitchers. The taking of Oreb and Zeeb by the Ephraimites.

NOTES.

V. 1. "The well of Harod" (= *spring of trembling*). This was the "**Spring of Jezreel**," whose name was now changed to "**The Spring of trembling**," because from hence returned 22,000 of Gideon's men who were afraid. Mentioned again in 2 Samuel xxiii., 25. It is supposed to have been a spacious pool at the foot of Mount Gilboa.

"**The valley**" (= The plain of Jezreel).

"**Hill of Moreh**." Supposed to be the same as Little Hermon.

V. 3. "Mount Gilead." As Gilead was beyond Jordan, the mention of it here causes a difficulty. Some suggest that it is the same as Mt. Gilboa, others that it was some mountain in Western Manasseh. The Hebrew letters for Gilead and Gilboa are very similar, therefore there is some ground for the former view.

V. 5. "As a dog lappeth." A dog drinks by shaping the end of its tongue like a spoon: men cannot do this; so that we are not to suppose Gideon's 300 men lapping with their tongue alone. Their manner of drinking is explained in v. 6., they "**lapped, putting their hand to their mouth**." They formed their hand into a sort of cup, filled

it, and jerked it into the mouth. This being done, the rapidity looks very much like the quick lapping of a dog. This method of drinking is customary in the East when persons are in haste, since the time consumed in thus quenching the thirst is far less than by bringing the mouth in contact with the water. The fact, then, that 300 "lapped," showed that they were more eager for the fight than the rest who drank at their leisure.

V. 9. "Arise, get thee down unto the host," *i.e.*, Attack them at once with thy 300 men.

V. 10. "Go thou with Phurah thy servant." Compare with this the appearance of Alfred the Great in the Danish camp, and in the character of a harper.

The meaning of verses 9 and 10 seems to be this: Go with thy 300 men into the camp of the enemy to smite them, for I have given them into thy hand; but if thou art afraid to do this, go with Phurah thy servant to the camp, and ascertain the feeling of the foe, and thou wilt hear what they say—how they are discouraged, have lost all hope of defeating you; and from that, thou wilt gather courage and strength.

V. 12. "Grasshoppers," *i.e.*, locusts.

V. 13. "Barley bread." This was only used by the poorest. This cake would therefore be typical of the mean and insignificant agency by which the Midianites were to be defeated.

V. 14. The cake doubtless appeared as rolling down the hill upon which Gideon and his 300 men were stationed, hence the reason for the dreamer's companion connecting the interpretation with Gideon.

V. 19. "And brake the pitchers." The pitchers were used to conceal the lamps, until by the noise of their breaking, and the sudden disappearance of the light, the Midianites would be put to confusion.

V. 22. "Beth-shittah" (= *the house of the acacia*). Was situated in the plain of Jezreel.

"Zererath." This is probably the same as Zeredath, and Zeredah which is in Ephraim, the birthplace of Jeroboam (1 Kings xi., 26). Called also Zerédatha and Zartanah.

"Abel-meholah" (= *field of the dance*). Situated about 10 miles south of Bethshean. It was the birthplace of Elisha the prophet (1 Kings xix., 16).

V. 25. Oreb (= *raven*) and **Zeeb** (= *wolf*). The capture of these two princes was celebrated in Psalm lxxxiii. many years after, and the scenes of their execution is supposed to be near Jericho. North of ancient Jericho, there is a high, rocky peak called **"Ash el Ghorab"** (= *nest of the raven*), and this therefore is identified as the **rock Oreb**. Near this spot, on the north-west, is a mound called **"Tuweil el Dhib"** (= *ascent of the wolf*), and this is identified as the place of the **execution of Zeeb**.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Where did Gideon and his followers first pitch their camp?
2. Give the geographical position of the Well of Harod, Hill of Moreh, Beth-shittah, Zererath, Abel-meholah, and with what events is each connected?
3. Did God state any reason for the reduction of Gideon's army to 300? If so, what was it?
4. By what two methods was Gideon's army reduced?

5. Who was Phurah, and what mention have we of him here?
6. Mention an event in modern history which is similar in character to that of "**Gideon visiting the Midianitish camp as a spy.**"
7. Give the dream of the Midianitish soldiers, and the interpretation given to it by his friends.
8. Relate the stratagem by which Gideon obtained his victory over the Midianites.
9. In what direction did the Midianites flee? and which of the tribes pursued them?
10. Who were Oreb and Zeeb?
11. Explain the allusions in the following passages:—
 - (i.) Mine own hand hath saved me.
 - (ii.) Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth.
 - (iii.) This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon.
 - (iv.) Look on me and do likewise.
 - (v.) The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANALYSIS.

Gideon pacifies the Ephraimites. Pursues Zebah and Zalmunna. Is refused food by the men of Succoth and Penuel. Zebah and Zalmunna are captured and slain. The men of Succoth and Penuel are punished. Gideon refuses to be made king. Sets up a sanctuary. Dies.

NOTES.

V. 1. "The men of Ephraim." In chapter xii., 1, we have the same haughty language used by this tribe toward Jephthah. They seemed to have had an idea that they were the most important tribe. They certainly were the leading tribe in Central Palestine. However, ultimately the supremacy completely passed over to the tribe of Judah.

The importance of the Ephraimites would chiefly arise from

- (1.) Ephraim being preferred to his brother Manasseh by Jacob.
- (2.) Their being descendants of Joshua, the great deliverer of Israel.
- (3.) Shiloh, the religious Capital of Israel, being within their territory.
- (4.) Their being at this time the most numerous.

V. 2. "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?" By the "**gleaning of Ephraim**" we are to understand their victory over the fleeing Midianites, and by the "**vintage of Abiezer**," the part taken in the battle up to that time, by Gideon and his 300 followers. Gideon therefore declares that the victory gained by the Ephraimites was more honourable than his victory, inasmuch as the Ephraimites had slain the two princes Oreb and Zeeb. This victory of the Ephraimites is mentioned in Isaiah x., 26, as a great blow of the Lord upon Midian.

V. 5. "Succoth" (= *booths*). This was on the eastern side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and not very far off the river Jabbok. Here Jacob encamped on his return from Padan-aram. (Gen. xxxiii., 17.)

"**Zebah**" (= *sacrifice*) and "**Zalmunna**" (= *without a shadow*). These would be superior in rank to Oreb and Zeeb.

V. 7. "Then I will tear your flesh." Literally, "**I will thresh your flesh**" (*i.e.*, your body). Referring doubtless to a mode of capital punishment. (Amos i., 3; 2 Sam. xii., 31.)

V. 8. "Peniel" (= *face of God*). This is the same as Peniel. It was situated on the east side of Jordan, near the Jabbok and not very far from Succoth. It was here that Jacob wrestled with the angel, and his name was changed to Israel.

V. 9. "When I come again in peace," *i.e.*, "If I return unhurt."

V. 10. "Karkor." In the desert, east of Jordan, and not a day's journey from Succoth.

V. 11. "Nobah" (= *that barks or yelps*). This place was in Manasseh east of the Jordan. (Num. xxxii., 40-42.)

"Jogbehah." A place in the tribe of Gad. (Num. xxxii., 34, 35.)

V. 14. "He described unto him." Rather, "He wrote down the names," as Gideon could scarcely remember the names of 77 men.

V. 16. "He taught the men of Succoth." There are two opinions with regard to the meaning of the word "**taught**" in this verse :—

(1.) That it is equivalent to "**made to know**," and

(2.) To "**threshed**."

The latter certainly is the most likely. He slew the "**men of Penuel**," therefore he must have scourged to death the "**men of Succoth**." "**Men**" in these verses is a general expression for "**elders**" (*i.e.*, representatives of the city, including the princes).

V. 17. "Beat down the tower of Penuel." This was rebuilt by Jeroboam. (1 Kings xii., 25.)

V. 20. "Up, and slay them." Gideon was bent on making their death as ignominious as possible. For a king to be slain by a youth would be very lowering.

V. 21. "As the man is, so is his strength." Doubtless Zebah and Zalmunna were afraid that the boy would not be equal to the task of causing death at one blow, and that they would thus die a lingering death. Therefore they said to Gideon, "Rise thou, and fall upon us," for such strength does not belong to a boy, but to a man.

V. 22. "Rule thou over us." The immediate effect of Gideon's victory on the nation was greater than that of any other. Not only had the Israelites quietness for forty years, but for the first time they offered hereditary dignity to the great conqueror. Gideon refused the honour. There are no historical parallels to this incident of refusal. Moses and Joshua might have easily made themselves kings, but they were never invited to it. Cæsar and Oliver Cromwell refused the crown on the ground of policy, but Gideon refused it on account of his fidelity to an unseen monarch, "**the Lord God of Israel,**" who had just given them a proof of His power to protect His people. "**The Lord shall rule over you,**" says he, and no other.

V. 24. "Ishmaelites." This name is applied generally to all the tribes whose habits were the same as those of the Arabs. The connection of the Midianites and Ishmaelites may be seen from the following account. The "**Midianites**" were the descendants of Midian, Abraham's son by Keturah, the "**Ishmaelites,**" of Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar. Hence the Midianites were not Ishmaelites. But from Gen. xxxvii. we find that the tribes of Arabia are called indifferently Midianites and Ishmaelites.

V. 27 "An ephod." This was that particular part of the High-priest's dress which he had to wear when he inquired of God by Urim and Thummim. There is a description of it in Exod. xxviii., 4-31.

V. 31. "Abimelech" (= *my father a King*, or, as some would have it, "*Father of a King*"). Whichever meaning we attach to the word "Abimelech," it certainly shows that in Gideon's old age, the idea of having been once offered the kingship was not forgotten.

Baal-berith (= *the Covenant Baal*). According to chap. ix., 46, the worship of Baal-berith, as performed at Shechem was an imitation of the worship of Jehovah, that is, Baal was placed in the place of Jehovah.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What request did Gideon make of the "**men of Succoth and Penuel**?" What reason had they for refusing?
2. How did Gideon afterwards deal with the men of Succoth and Penuel? Why should he have been so severe?
3. Explain the conduct of the Ephraimites in this war against the Midianites. What answer was given to them by Gideon?
4. In putting Zebah and Zalmunna to death, what special mark of disgrace did Gideon wish to inflict upon them?
5. What change with regard to the form of government did the people wish after Gideon's victory over the Midianites?
6. How did Gideon dispose of this question of government?
7. Give the geographical position of Succoth, Penuel, Nobah, Jogbehah; and with what events are they connected?
8. Trace the connection of the Ishmaelites with the Midianites.
9. What was the name of Gideon's eldest son?
10. Who was Abimelech? and give the meaning of the name.
11. Towards the end of his days into what serious mistakes did Gideon fall?
12. What was the ephod? Explain Gideon's conduct with regard to the ephod in Ophrah.
13. For how long did the Israelites have peace in the days of Gideon?
14. Where was Gideon buried?
15. Where was the centre of the worship of Baal-berith? and give the meaning of the name.
16. Explain the allusions—
 - (i.) The gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim.
 - (ii.) As the man is, so is his strength.
 - (iii.) He taught the men of Succoth.
 - (iv.) What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?
 - (v.) Which thing became a snare unto Gideon and his house.
 - (vi.) For they be faint and I am pursuing.

CHAPTER IX.

ANALYSIS.

Abimelech is made king, through a conspiracy with the Shechemites and the murder of his brethren. In a parable Jotham foretells their destruction. Gaal and the Shechemites conspire against Abimelech—the conspiracy is revealed by Zebul, and he overcomes them and soweth the city with salt. He is slain at Thebez by a piece of millstone. Jotham's curse is fulfilled.

NOTES.

V. 3. "He is our brother." Abimelech was the son of a Shechemite woman (chap. viii., 31).

V. 4. "Baal-berith." See note, chap. viii., 31.

V. 6. "Millo" (= *fullness, repletion*). Most probably the same as the "tower of Shechem" in verses 46, 47. It was a fortified place close to Shechem, and it is evident from the words "the house of Millo," that there was a distinct population at Millo, which, though small in numbers, yet of great importance, as possessing this citadel.

"Made Abimelech King." Probably only of Shechem and the neighbourhood.

V. 7. "Mount Gerizim" (= *cutters*). Shechem lay at the base of this mountain, which was situated in Central Palestine. It was the mount upon which the blessings, as commanded by Moses, were to be recited (Deut. xi., 29). The curses were to be recited from Mount Ebal. Travellers inform us that the valley between the two mountains, in which Shechem lay, possesses remarkable acoustic properties. Persons speaking in Gerizim can be distinctly heard on Ebal, and therefore in the valley between them (*e.g.*, Shechem).

Gerizim was afterwards made famous as the site of the temple which the Samaritans built in rivalry to that at Jerusalem (St. John iv., 20).

V. 8-15. In these verses we have Jotham's parable of the trees electing a king. It is the first recorded in Bible History. We have only one other of the same kind, viz., 2 Kings xiv., 9.

The **trees** represent the **Shechemites**,—the **olive, fig, and vine**, Jotham's noble and virtuous **brethren**,—the **bramble**, the cruel **Abimelech**,—the **cedars** of Lebanon, the **elders of Shechem**. Hence the meaning of the parable is—

The people of Shechem were desirous of a king; they had asked Gideon and his sons to accept the office; but they, though worthy of it, had refused it. They then asked the vile and base-born Abimelech to accept the crown, and he accepted it.

The speech of the bramble to the trees represents a warning to the Shechemites. Unless they completely place themselves under Abimelech's rule, he will utterly destroy even their chief men (or elders).

V. 16-20. These verses contain the interpretation of the parable.

V. 21. "Beer" (= *well*). It is hard to identify this place. The most probable situation is, on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, near Beth-shemesh.

V. 26. "Gaal, the son of Ebed." Nothing further is known of this person.

V. 28. "Hamor" (= *an ass, clay, wine*). He was the King of Shechem in Jacob's time, and from him Jacob bought a piece of ground near the city, which was named after Hamor's son "Shechem."

“The men of Hamor.” These would therefore be the patricians of the city, who derived their origin from the noblest and most ancient stock of Hamor.

V. 37. “The plain of Meonenim.” Rather, **“The oak of the soothsayers.”**

V. 41. “Arumah” (= *high, exalted, cast away*). Not mentioned again, but it must have been just outside Shechem.

V. 45. “Sowed it with salt,” *i.e.*, Sowed with salt, the ground where the city had stood. All soils saturated with salt are barren, hence the sowing salt over the ruins of a city indicated a desire that it might be a desolation for ever. But Shechem was rebuilt by Jeroboam.

V. 46. “The men of the tower of Shechem.” These are the same as **“The house of Millo.”** (Verses 6 and 20.)

V. 48. “Zalmon” (= *shady*). This was a mountain in the neighbourhood of Shechem. It might probably be the same as Ebal.

V. 49. This setting fire to the hold where the men of Shechem were crowded together, was the literal fulfilment of Jotham’s curse, verse 20.

V. 50. “Thebez” (= *brightness*). A town 13 miles north of Shechem, and whose inhabitants were implicated in Gaal’s rebellion. It is the modern Tubar.

V. 53. “And all to brake his skull.” Rather, **“And altogether break his skull.”** The old English “all to” being equivalent to, “altogether,” “quite,” “entirely.”

Compare—

As fruit that with the frost is taken
To-day ready ripe, to-morrow "**all to**" shaken.
(*Chaucer.*)

In the various bustle of resort
Were "**all to**" ruffled and sometimes impaired.
(*Milton.* "*Comus*," p. 380.)

54. "He called unto his armour-bearer," &c. A similar request was made by Saul, the first King of Israel, when wounded at the battle of Mount Gilboa. (1 Samuel xxxi., 4.)

"A woman slew him." Compare with this Joab's message to David. (2 Sam. xl., 18-21.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How did Abimelech obtain the chief power in Israel?
2. Relate Jotham's parable, and explain the terms used.
3. What is the difference between a parable and a fable? Which of these is the so-called "**Jotham's parable**?"
4. What curse did Jotham pronounce against the Shechemites?
5. Give the geographical position of Mount Gerizim, Shechem, Thebez, Beer.
6. Who were Gaal and Zebul?
7. What became of Jotham and Abimelech?
8. Explain the allusions—
 - (i.) I am your bone and your flesh.
 - (ii.) Is not he the son of Jerubbaal?
 - (iii.) Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.
 - (iv.) A woman slew him.
 - (v.) What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done.

CHAPTER X.

ANALYSIS.

Tola judges Israel in Shamir. Jair's judgeship. The oppression of the Philistines and Ammonites. The repentance of Israel.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Tola, the son of Puah." Tola (= *little worm*) was of the tribe of Issachar (1 Chr. vii., 1). He judged Israel 23 years.

"Shamir" (= *thorns*). Where this place was situated is unknown. But it cannot be the Shamir mentioned in Josh. xv., 48. It was probably within the territory of Issachar.

V. 3. "A Gileadite." Jair (= *enlightened*) would therefore be of the tribe of Manasseh, east of Jordan.

V. 4. "Thirty cities which are called Havoth-jair." Havoth-jair (= *the small towns of Jair*) had been a name given long ago to cities in Argob by their conqueror Jair, under Moses (Deut. iii., 14). Hence we must understand that the name was only revived in the time of this judge, and were so called at the time when the writer of the book lived.

V. 5. "Camon" (= *his resurrection*). This city is called by Josephus "a city of Gilead," thus placing it across the Jordan, but there is little reason for this. Others make it the same as "**Jokneam of Carmel**" (Josh. xii., 22). However nothing certain is known about it.

V. 11. "From the Egyptians." At the Exodus.

“From the Amorites.” In the victories over Sihon and Og and the five kings of the Amorites (Josh. x., 5, 6, 12).

“From the Philistines.” In the time of Shamgar (chap. iii., 31).

V. 12. “The Zidonians.” In the time of Barak, when they must have been confederates of Jabin (chap. iv., 2, 3).

“The Amalekites.” In the time of Gideon (chap. vi., 33).

“The Maonites.” These were the same as the Midianites; therefore the deliverance took place in the time of Gideon.

V. 17. “Mizpeh” (= *watch tower or look out*). This was a city of Gilead, in Manasseh, east of Jordan. It was here that Laban and Jacob made their covenant (Gen. xxxi., 49).

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What were the names of the two judges who succeeded Gideon?
2. In what respect are we told more of Tola than of any other judge?
3. The period of time between Jair and Jephthah was a specially sinful period. Prove the statement from this chapter.
4. How were the Israelites punished for this apostasy?
5. The children of Jair had 30 cities. What name did they give to these?
6. Where did the Israelites encamp in order to fight the Ammonites?
7. Give the geographical position of Mizpeh, Camon, Gilead, and Shamir, and with what events are they connected?
8. Explain the allusions.
 - (i.) Havoth-jair unto this day.
 - (ii.) I will deliver you no more.
 - (iii.) What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon?

CHAPTER XI.

ANALYSIS.

Jephthah's origin. His agreement with the Gileadites. **His vow.** The Ammonites are defeated by him. He fulfils his vow.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Gilead begat Jephthah" (= *liberator*). Three views may be taken of the word Gilead in this verse:—

- (i.) That it was the land of Gilead personified.
- (ii.) That he is the same as the son of Machir and grandson of Manasseh.
- (iii.) That it is the proper name of Jephthah's father.

The last is certainly the most probable, and verse 2, where we have mention of Gilead's wife, seems to confirm this view.

V. 2. "Thou shalt not inherit." With this compare the sending away by Abraham of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, in order that they might not inherit along with Isaac. (Gen. xxi., 10.)

V. 3. "Land of Tob" (= *goodness*). To the north of Gilead towards Damascus.

V. 9. "Shall I be your head?" These words enable us to compare the character of Jephthah with that of Gideon. Gideon said, "**The Lord shall rule over you, not I.**" This clearly places Gideon on a higher platform than Jephthah, as the latter sought his own self-promotion as a reason for delivering his fellow countrymen. Still Jephthah is recorded among the faithful in Heb. xi., 32.

V. 11. "Mizpeh." This is, as before, "Mizpeh in Gilead." Some have thought it "Mizpeh in Benjamin," but

this could hardly be the case, as the war was primarily resolved upon by the Eastern tribes alone.

V. 13. "Arnon" (= *rushing stream*). This river empties itself into the Dead Sea, about midway down on the east side.

"Jabbok" (= *pourer or emptier*). This river rises in the mountains of Gilead, and empties itself into the Jordan, near Zaretan and the city Adam. (Josh. iii., 16.)

V. 13. "Israel took away my land." From Num. xxi., 24, we learn that Israel took the land from Sihon, King of the Amorites, and not from the Ammonites, as here stated; however, the Amorites had previously expelled the Moabites and Ammonites from this territory; hence, in one respect, the King of the Ammonites was right.

V. 17. "Israel sent messengers unto the King of Edom." For an account of this see Num. xx., 14-21.

"Kadesh" (= *holy*), called also Kadesh-barnea (Josh. x., 41). It was between the wilderness of Sin and that of Paran. From here the twelve spies were sent to search out the land, Joshua and Caleb alone bringing a good report.

V. 19. "Heshbon" (= *device*). This was the capital city of Sihon, King of the Amorites.

V. 20. "Jahaz" (= *dispute, going out of the Lord*). The site of this place must have been somewhere to the East of of the Dead Sea. (Num. xxi., 23.)

V. 21. "Land of the Amorites." Not of the Ammonites and Moabites as verse 13.

V. 24. "Chemosh" (= *as handling, as taking away*). This was the god of the Moabites.

V. 33. "Minnith" (= *counted, prepared*). This was a large corn-growing district in the table-land east of Jordan. (Ezekiel xxvii., 17.)

Jephthah's Vow and its results. It was the universal opinion for a long time that Jephthah did actually sacrifice his daughter to Jehovah, as he had vowed; however, as time went on, another opinion sprang up, viz., that she was only consecrated to the service of the Lord, in the sense that Samuel was consecrated.

Before we can examine either of these opinions, it is necessary that we should know what the vow was, the prevailing opinion with regard to vows thus made, and whether it was right to sacrifice human beings to the Lord under any circumstances.

According to the English version the words of the vow ran thus: "**Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me . . . shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.**" Those upholding the first opinion lay stress on the words "**I will offer,**" and take in conjunction with them those of verse 39, "**Who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed.**"

Now, if we insist on the literal meaning of the words, we cannot possibly but come to the conclusion that Jephthah did actually sacrifice his daughter.

However, this opinion is hardly in keeping with the spirit of the Bible, and there is a great tendency to adopt the second view, and those who uphold it read the passage thus "**Whatsoever . . . shall surely be the Lord's, or I will offer it for a burnt-offering.**" The meaning would thus be, if it were an animal fit for sacrifice, Jephthah would sacrifice it, but if he were a human being, then he would dedicate him to the service of the Lord.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What views are held with regard to the Gilead mentioned in v. 1?
2. Where did Jephthah go to when fleeing from his brethren?
3. Quote Jephthah's reply to the elders of Gilead, when they asked him to take the command of the army.
4. Compare Jephthah with Gideon.
5. What reason did the King of Ammon assign for making an attack upon Israel?
6. What was the substance of Jephthah's answer?
7. Quote Jephthah's vow, and give the opinions held on the fulfilling of this vow.
8. Give the geographical position of the "Land of Tob," Arnon, Jabbok, Heshbon, and Jahaz.
9. When, and by whom, were the following words spoken?—
 - (i.) Thou art the son of a strange woman.
 - (ii.) Shall I be your head.
 - (iii.) Restore those lands again peaceably.
 - (iv.) Did he ever strive against Israel.
 - (v.) Let this thing be done for me.

 CHAPTER XII.

 ANALYSIS.

Jephthah's quarrel with the Ephraimites, and its result. He dies. Ibzan's judgeship, and also Abdon's.

NOTES.

V. 1. "We will burn thine house upon thee."
 Compare this threat with that of the Philistines to Samson's wife (xiv., 15), and notice also the result.

V. 2. "When I called you." They had therefore been asked to join the expedition, but had refused. Hence Ephraim's case grows worse.

V. 3. "I put my life in my hands." Jephthah was thus aware of the dangerous task he had undertaken. A similar phrase is used in 1 Samuel xix., 5; xxviii., 21.

V. 4. "Ye Gileadites are fugitives," *i.e.*, Ye are a mob gathered together from Ephraimites who have run away to escape justice.

V. 5. From this verse it is clear that the Ephraimites had invaded Gilead.

"Ephraimites which were escaped." These would be Ephraimites who had escaped from the battle, and were now endeavouring to return home.

V. 6. "Shibboleth" (*= a stream or flood*). We casually learn from this incident that distinct dialects had arisen in different parts of the country. Even in these days of frequent inter-communications we find various dialectic variations both in England and Wales, the dialect of North Wales being quite distinct from that of South Wales. Notice Peter betraying his Galilean origin by his speech.

V. 8. "Ibzan" (*= labour*). From the resemblance of the name, some have fancied this judge to have been the same as Boaz (Ruth ii., 1); but this is hardly probable.

"Bethlehem" (*= the house of bread or of war*). There are two places of this name mentioned in the Bible—the one in the territory of Judah, and the other in that of Zebulun. Which of these is meant here is a matter of doubt. However, the balance of opinion is in favour of Zebulun.

V. 11. "Elon" (= *splendid oak*). He seems to have held a similar position to Ibzan.

"A Zebulonite." The tribe of Zebulon showed great bravery in the time of Barak. (Chap. iv. and v.)

V. 12. "Aijalon." This is not to be confounded with Ajalon, in the territory of Dan. (Josh. x., 12, &c.) It should perhaps be Elon, so called from its owner.

"Abdon" (= *servile*). Called in 1 Sam. xii., 11, "Bedan."

"A Pirathonite." Pirathon (= *his dissipation, deprivation*), as we learn from verse 15, was in the territory of Ephraim. Therefore Abdon was an Ephraimite. Its site is about six miles south-west of Shechem. It was also the home of the hero Benaiah. (2 Sam. xxiii., 20, 30, &c.)

V. 15. "In the mount of the Amalekites." So called from some victory gained by the Ephraimites over the Amalekites.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How did the Ephraimites style Jephthah's followers?
2. Explain shibboleth, and give the occasion when it was employed as a test.
3. What judges succeeded Jephthah, and of what tribes were they? How many years did each judge Israel?
4. Where was Jephthah buried?
5. Give the geographical position of Gilead, Bethlehem, Pirathon, and state the events connected with each.
6. Explain the phrases :—
 - (i.) I put my life in my hands.
 - (ii.) Ye Gileadites are fugitives.
 - (iii.) In the land of Ephraim; in the mount of the Amalekites.
 - (iv.) For he could not frame to pronounce it right.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANALYSIS.

The birth of Samson is foretold by an angel.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Philistines." This tribe has often been mentioned before, but this is the first detailed account we have of their oppressing Israel. They continued to be prominent enemies of Israel until the time of David. (See chap. iii., 3.)

V. 2. "Zorah" (= *leprosy, scab*). This city was situated on the borders of Dan and Judah. Its modern name is "Surah."

"**Manoah**" (= *rest*) was of the tribe of Dan.

V. 4. "Not any unclean thing." The unclean thing mentioned here would be one of the special things forbidden to Nazarites, as mentioned in Num. vi., 3, 4.

V. 5. "Nazarite" (= *separated*). This means one set apart, by a peculiar vow, for the service of God. They were so, either for life (like Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist), or for a period of time (like St. Paul). During the term of his consecration the Nazarite was bound to abstain from

(i.) Wine, grapes, and anything made from the vine.

(ii.) Cutting his hair.

(iii.) Touching a dead body, even that of his nearest relation.

V. 12. Translate thus: "**What shall be the manner (ordering) of the child; and what shall be his work? (or exploit).**" The equivalent in modern English would be, "**How shall we manage the child, and what shall be his exploits?**"

V. 14. These three prohibitions which the angel imposes upon Samson's mother are simply the three things which distinguish the Nazarite from mankind generally.

V. 18. "**Secret,**" should be "**Wonderful.**" Compare the passage in Isaiah ix., 6, with regard to Christ; "His name shall be called Wonderful."

V. 24. "**Samson.**" The derivation of the word is doubtful. It is either from Shemesh = sun, or "Shamam" = to lay waste.

"**Camp of Dan,**" should be "Mahaneh-Dan." It was the name given to the district where the 600 Danites encamped on their way to "Laish."

"**Eshtaol**" (= *stout, strong woman*). On the borders of Dan and Judah, and about two miles east of "**Zorah.**"

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Who was Samson's father, and to what tribe did he belong?
2. State the meaning of the word Nazarite, and give the three prohibitions contained in the vow.
3. Give instances in the New Testament of persons who took the vow of a Nazarite, both for life and for a special period.
4. What request was refused Manoah by the angel? How did the angel admonish him?
5. What answer was given by the angel to the question, "What is thy name?"
6. Mention points of resemblance between the appearance of the "angel of Jehovah" to Samson's parents and to Gideon.
7. Give the geographical position of the Camp of Dan, Eshtaol, Zorah; and with what events is each connected?
8. Explain the allusions —
 - (i.) He shall begin to deliver Israel.
 - (ii.) Behold, the man hath appeared unto me.
 - (iii.) We shall surely die, because we have seen God.
 - (iv.) And the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANALYSIS.

Samson chooses a Philistine wife. Kills a lion. Marries. His riddle and its consequences.

NOTES.

V. 1. "Timnath" (= *image*). Called also "**Timnah**" and "**Timmatha**." Like Zorah and Eshtaol, it was assigned first to Judah, then to Dan. It never was taken from the Philistines, and it is now called Tibnah. It was situated to the west of Bethshemesh.

V. 4. "For at that time." This passage fixes the date of the composition of the Book of Judges. It was composed, as may be clearly inferred from this passage, when the Philistines had entirely ceased to rule in Israel, *i.e.*, some time in David's reign.

"It was of the Lord." The law of Moses forbade Israelites to intermarry with heathen nations. But from this expression, "**It was of the Lord**," we must understand that God permitted Samson to marry the Philistine woman, in order to accomplish His own purposes. God over-ruled Samson's waywardness and sin, in order to make him a scourge to the Philistines and bring about the deliverance of Israel.

V. 6. "And he rent him." David, when a shepherd, and the hero Benaiah also slew lions (1 Samuel xvii., 34; 2 Samuel xxiii., 20). Lions are not now found in Palestine, but there is abundant evidence that in ancient times they

must have been numerous. Johannes Phocas, who travelled in Palestine in the twelfth century, informs us that lions were to be found there then.

V. 8. "To take her." The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in removing the bride from her father's home to that of the bridegroom or of his father.

V. 12. "A riddle." Riddles formed one of the amusements at the entertainments of ancient nations. It is said that an Ethiopian monarch once staked many cities on the guessing of a riddle.

V. 15. From this verse it seems that the guests believed that they were purposely invited to the feast in order to be impoverished in the manner indicated.

V. 19. "Ashkelon." See chap. i., 18.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. State the occasion and the circumstances under which Samson showed great strength.
2. In what manner did Samson show that he respected his parents?
3. What were the conditions settled upon with regard to the guessing of the riddle? Relate the riddle in the words of the Bible.
4. Why did not Samson at once tell the interpretation of the riddle to his wife?
5. What did Samson tell the men of the city when they answered his riddle?
6. Did Samson fulfil his engagement? If so, how did he manage to obtain the required number of changes of garments?
7. What is to be said of Samson's marriage? Was it lawful?
8. Explain the allusions—
 - (i.) For she pleaseth me well.
 - (ii.) For so used the young men to do.
 - (iii.) Have ye called us to take that we have?
 - (iv.) If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

CHAPTER XV.

ANALYSIS.

Samson's wife is given to another. He burns the corn of the Philistines with foxes and firebrands. He is betrayed by the men of Judah. Slays 1,000 Philistines with a jawbone.

NOTES.

V. 3. "Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines." Samson in this sentence seems to admit that the Philistines had some ground of complaint against him previously, *i.e.*, when he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty unoffending men in revenge for a trick.

V. 4. Foxes, *i.e.*, jackals. These are still to be found in abundance in the Holy Land.

V. 6. "Burnt her." Two views may be taken of this act of the Philistines.

- (1.) They burnt his wife and father-in-law out of revenge towards Samson, they being the nearest relations they could find.
- (2.) They did it as an act of justice towards Samson, in the hope of pacifying his anger, seeing how destructive he was.

The latter seems the more likely. We may here notice that his wife met the very same treatment at the hands of her countrymen, as she tried to avoid, by deceiving her husband.

V. 8. "Hip and thigh." This is a proverbial expression for a cruel and unsparing slaughter.

"Etam" (= *eagle's nest*). Believed to be situated about five miles S.E. of Zorah, which was situated on the borders of Dan and Judah.

V. 9. "Lehi" (=jaw). Not identified, and was not so called till the incident of the jawbone.

V. 17. "Ramath-lehi," literally, "the height or hill of Lehi," or the hill of the jawbone.

V. 19. "A hollow place that was in the jaw" should be "the hollow place which is in Lehi." In this hollow a spring burst out in Samson's need. Notice how misleading the word "jaw" is in our version.

"Enhakkore" (= "*the foundation of him who calls,*" i.e., upon God).

"Unto this day." These words denote that the spring was in existence at the time when the book was written.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How did Samson take vengeance upon the Philistines for the final loss of his wife?
2. After avenging himself upon the Philistines, where did he retire to?
3. Describe how it came to pass that the children of Judah so willingly handed Samson over to the Philistines.
4. What happened after he was thus betrayed by his own countrymen?
5. What epithet did he use with regard to the Philistines when he was thirsting after the exploits at Ramath-lehi?
6. What evidence have we in this chapter that the Philistines did not hold any power in Israel, when this book was written?
7. Where is Etam? and give the meaning of the word.
8. Explain the following phrases :
 - (i.) He smote them hip and thigh.
 - (ii.) Heap upon heap.
 - (iii.) God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANALYSIS.

Samson escapes from the people of Gaza. Carries away the city gates. He is betrayed by his wife Delilah. Loses his sight and liberty. Pulls down the house upon the Philistines and dies.

NOTES.

V. 1. "**Gaza**" (= *the strong*). See note, chap. i., 18.

V. 3. "**An hill that is before Hebron.**" This may be understood in one of two ways—

- (i.) Facing Hebron, which is about 40 miles from Gaza.
- (ii.) In the direction of Hebron.

The latter is the more likely. The exact situation of the hill is not known; some place it about a mile S.S.E. of Gaza, others 30 or 40 miles from Gaza. Milton, in his "*Samson Agonistes*," considers this hill as the "**Hill of Hebron.**"

"Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore
The gates of Azza, post and massy bar,
Up to the hill of Hebron, seats of giants old,
No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so."

V. 4. "**In the valley of Sorek.**" Sorek (= *torrent bed*) was a village somewhere in the neighbourhood of Zorah, Samson's birthplace.

"**Delilah**" (= *delicate*), Samson's second wife. This is a common name for girls in Maltese poetry.

V. 5. "**And the lords of the Philistines.**" These were five in number, viz., Gaza, Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, and Ashkelon.

“**Eleven hundred pieces of silver.**” This large reward shows the importance of the capture of Samson. In our own money it was equivalent to about £675. 1,100 shekels being worth about £135, 1 shekel = 2s. 4d.

V. 7. “Seven green withs”—*i.e.*, “Seven new cords” (or ropes). These were tough, pliant wood twisted in the form of a cord or rope.

V. 13, 14. “If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. And she fastened it with the pin.” The technical terms used, and the contraction of the account, make the meaning of these verses rather obscure. To make it clear we ought to add a line which is found in the Greek version of the Old Testament. The verses would then read, “**If thou interweavest the seven locks of my head with that web, and fasten them to the pin, I shall become weak, and be as another man. So while he was asleep she interwove the seven locks of his head with the web, and she fastened them to the pin.**”

The idea was suggested to Samson from his wife having the loom in the room at the time.

From the account it would also seem that Samson wore his hair in seven plaits or curls. A kind of superstition being attached to the number seven.

V. 23. “Dagon” (= *fish*). Dagon was the national idol of the Philistines. His form was a fish, as the name Dag signifies, but he had human hands, feet, and body (1 Sam. v., 4). There was a temple for Dagon, both at Ashdod and Gaza. This reminds us of the circumstance when the Philistines, in the time of Eli captured the Ark; they placed it in the temple of Dagon, at Ashdod. The result was that the idol fell down and was broken into pieces.

V 26. In many of these passages the student would do well to refer to Milton's "Samson Agonistes," where he will find this and other passages well set forth, *e.g.* :—

The building was a spacious theatre,
Half round, on two main pillars, vaulted high, &c.—*Line 1605.*

V. 28. In this verse Samson uses three different titles of the Almighty—

- (i.) Samson called unto the Lord (*i.e.*, **Jehovah**).
- (ii.) O Lord God (*i.e.*, **O Lord Jehovah**), remember me.
- (iii.) I pray thee, only this once, O God (*i.e.*, **Elohim**).

"**That I may at once be avenged.**" Literally, "And I will be avenged with one vengeance." He seems to have forgotten the words of the Lord, "Vengeance is Mine."

V. 31. "Zorah and Eshtaol." See notes, chap. xiii.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. The Philistines offered Delilah, Samson's wife, a reward for the discovery of the secret of her husband's strength. What was it?
2. Relate the occasions on which Samson was bound with cords or otherwise, stating the results in each case.
3. Where, besides in the Bible, do you get a good description of the matters related in this chapter? Mention the lines which describe the "**falling of the house.**"
4. How did Samson bring about his own ruin?
5. In what respect was Samson's judging Israel different from that of all the other judges?
6. Can his last act towards the Philistines be in any way justified?
7. The geographical position of Hebron, Gaza, Sorek, Eshtaol, and give events connected with each.
8. What, in English money, was the amount of the reward offered to Delilah for discovering the source of Samson's strength?
9. Explain the allusions—
 - (i.) Let me die with the Philistines.
 - (ii.) And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.
 - (iii.) Behold, thou has mocked me and told me lies.
 - (iv.) See - - by what means we may prevail against him.
 - (v.) When it is day we shall kill him.

CHAPTER XVII.

ANALYSIS.

The theft and image worship of Micah. A Levite is appointed as Micah's priest.

NOTES.

The time in which the events recorded in this and the following chapters is much earlier than that of those recorded in the chapters immediately preceding. These must have taken place immediately after Joshua's death. Hence this chapter in point of time ought to follow chapter iii. The only connection between it and chapter xvi. is that we are still dealing with the tribe of Dan.

V. 1. "Micah" (= *who is like Jehovah*). Scripture does not mention the name of his father nor his mother. Hence we are left ignorant of his parentage.

V. 2. "Eleven hundred shekels." See note chapter xvi.

V. 3. "To make a graven image and a molten image." Micah's mother obviously had no knowledge of the Ten Commandments. For there we have as a commandment "Thou shalt not make any graven image." That she should have been ignorant of these matters is not to be wondered at in those troubled and unsettled times.

V. 5. "Ephod." See note, chap. viii., 27.

"Teraphim" (= *prosperity*). These were small images of worship, corresponding to the Latin Penates (or household gods). Sometimes they were the size of a man. (1 Sam. xix., 13, 16.)

V. 6. This verse clearly proves the statement that the Book of Judges was written after the establishment of a kingly government.

V. 7. "Of the family" = "of the tribe."

V. 8. "Mount Ephraim," *i.e.*, the hill country of Ephraim.

V. 13. "I have a Levite to my priest." In this passage it is worthy of notice that an ordinary Levite could not act as priest unless he were of the family of Aaron. Korah was a Levite, but was consumed by fire when he dared to offer incense before the tabernacle.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. To what period of time would you refer the events of this chapter ? Give your reason.
2. Relate how Micah's house of God was set up and equipped.
3. What made him think that his arrangement would be satisfactory to God, and that he would prosper ?
4. Which branch of the Levites had a right to the priesthood ? Relate an incident in which God showed his anger when this law of the priesthood was broken.
5. What were the ephod and teraphim.
6. Which Commandment was broken by Micah's family ? Give it in full.
7. Three special sins of Micah are mentioned in this chapter. Name them.
8. Explain the allusions—
 - (i.) I am a Levite of Bethlehem-Judah.
 - (ii.) Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son.
 - (iii.) The silver is with me. I took it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANALYSIS.

The emigration of the Danites to Laish which eventually is called Dan. They rob Micah of his priest and idols.

NOTES.

V. 1. "All their inheritance." In chapter i., 34, we have a reason for their not occupying the territory allotted to them among the tribe of Judah.

"And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley."

V. 2. "Zorah and Eshtaol." See notes on chap. xi., xvi.

"Mount Ephraim." See note, chap. xvii., 8.

V. 3. "By the house." Rather, "In the house."

"They know the voice" *i.e.*, "Heard his voice," and perceived from his dialect that he was not a native of the hill country of Ephraim.

V. 7. "Laish" (= *a lion*). Called "**Leshem**" in Joshua xix., 47, and **Dan**, after the conquest by the Danites. It was situated in the extreme north of Israel, near the source of the Jordan. Modern name is Tell el Kadi. Notice the phrase, "Dan to Beersheba."

"Zidonians." The inhabitants of Zidon (= *fishing*), an ancient and wealthy city of Phœnicia, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, twenty miles north of Tyre. They were a powerful people, yet more commercial than military, hence the epithets "quiet and secure."

V. 12. "Kirjah-jearim" (= *city of forests*). Called also "**Kirjah-Baal**" (city of Baal), and "**Baalah**." (Josh. xv., 60 ; xviii., 14 ; 2 Sam. vi., 2.) Situated in the tribe of Judah, near to Gibeon.

"Mahaneh-Dan" (= *camp of Dan*). It was here that Samson began to show his strength.

V. 14. "Now therefore consider what ye have to do," *i.e.*, do not let us lose this opportunity of providing for our own worship, in our new settlement.

"The carriage"—(rather "the valuables"). This word which now signifies "that which carries" (*e.g.*, a cart or vehicle), in the times of the translation of the Ancient Version of the Bible, signified "that which was carried" (such as luggage, baggage, &c). See also the use of this word in Acts xxi., 15, "We took up our carriages and went up to Jerusalem."

V. 28. "Because it was far from Zidon." Zidon even now was powerful. This phrase shows that there was some kinship between Laish and Zidon.

"Beth-rehob" (rehob = *breadth*). In Num. xii., 21, Beth-rehob is described as the northern extremity of Palestine, and its position is defined with reference to the "entering in of Hamath."

V. 30. "The son of Manasseh" should be "The son of Moses." The mistake has arisen from a mistaken view of the Hebrew text, and the desire to avoid Moses, the great lawgiver, in this idolatrous worship. Jonathan, therefore, was thus Moses' grandson, and this Jonathan could hardly be any other than the Levite whom the Danites had carried with them, and to whom they had promised the priesthood. Verses 19 and 21.

“Until the day of the captivity of the land.” This has been taken to refer to the carrying away of the ten tribes by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser (1 Chr. v., 22; 2 Kings xv., 29; xvii., 6). Hence it has been urged that the book was written after that captivity, probably by Ezra. For this supposition there is not much ground, even if it does refer to the above captivity, as the passage may have, like many others, been written by Ezra or some other person. Another interpretation suggested, is that of **“captivity of the land,”** we are simply to understand, **“until the time when the presence of Jehovah, as their leader, was gone.”** Without His presence, the soil, though physically the same, would be as a foreign land. It was His presence that made Canaan “the glory of all lands.” (Ezekiel xx., 6.) Both views are well supported.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What connection had the Danites with Micah's priest?
2. After leaving Micah's house, where did the five spies go?
3. On the second visit of the five Danite spies to the house of Micah, what took place?
4. What was the threat that caused Micah to give up all hope of recovering his idols? Do you know of another instance in the Bible of household gods being taken away?
5. From what famous family did Jonathan, the priest of the Danites, descend?
6. What success attended the Danite expedition?
7. How long did the priesthood at Dan last?
8. Give the geographical position of Kirjath-jearim, Mahaneh-dan, Laish, Zidon, and explain the phrase from “Dan to Beersheba.”
9. Explain the allusions.
 - (i.) Far from the Zidonians.
 - (ii.) Until the day of the captivity of the land.
 - (iii.) And they built a city, and dwelt therein.
 - (iv.) What aileth thee?
 - (v.) Be to us a father and a priest.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANALYSIS.

The abominable outrage at Gibeah. The Levite divides his wife into twelve pieces, and sends them to the twelve tribes.

NOTES.

V. 10. "Jebus." This is the ancient name of Jerusalem (= *secret foundation*).

V. 12. "City of a stranger." This phrase shows how completely the Jebusites had driven out the tribe of Judah and Benjamin from this city.

"Gibeah" (= *hill town*). This is the same as "Gibeah of Saul" (Josh. xv., 57), four miles east of Mizpeh, and rather more than four miles north of Jerusalem. Supposed also to be the same as the "Hill of God" mentioned in 1 Samuel x., 5.

V. 13. "Ramah" (= *hill*). This was situated about five miles from Jerusalem. We have several places of this name mentioned in the Bible.

V. 18. "The house of the Lord," *i.e.*, Shiloh. The Levite being one of those who ministered at the Tabernacle.

V. 22. "Sons of Belial." As Belial means worthlessness, therefore sons of Belial must mean "worthless men."

Notice what Hosea says of this crime :—

"O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah ; there they stood ; the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them. (Hosea x., 9.)

CHAPTER XX.

ANALYSIS.

The war with Benjamin on the part of all the other tribes. All the Benjamites being destroyed except six hundred.

NOTES.

V. 1. "From Dan to Beersheba." A proverbial expression for "From one end of the land to the other."

"The land of Gilead." The two and a half tribes on the east of Jordan.

"Mizpeh." Not the one mentioned in chapter x., but Mizpeh in Benjamin, situated four miles from Gibeah, on the loftiest hill in the neighbourhood.

V. 18. This is the only passage in the book in which express mention is made of the tabernacle, ark, priest, and sacrifices.

"To the house of God," *i.e.*, Bethel.

V. 32. "Let us flee, and draw them from the city." The narrative of the ambush cannot but remind us of Joshua's stratagem before Ai. The Israelites were anxious to draw out the Benjamites from Gibeah along two roads, one towards Bethel and the other towards Gibeah in the field (an outlying dependency). In this attempt they were successful.

V. 33. "Baal-tamar" (= *master of the palm tree*). It was probably a grove of palm trees near Gibeah where Baal was worshipped.

V. 40. Gibeah was again rebuilt, and became king Saul's favourite abode, from which it had the name "Gibeah of Saul."

V. 45. "The rock of Rimmon." A town, N.E. of Gibeah, situated on a very lofty peak. Supposed to be the site of "**Ai.**"

CHAPTER XXI.

The people bewail the desolation of Benjamin. By the destruction of Jabesh-gilead they provide them four hundred wives.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What brought the Levite and his wife to Gibeah ?
2. What did the Levite do with his murdered wife, and what was the result ?
3. What do you notice in the position of the Ark at this time ?
4. Mention points of resemblance between the attack of Gibeah by the eleven tribes, and that of Joshua at Ai.
5. What were the feelings of the united tribes after the overthrow of Benjamin ?
6. Give the geographical position of Gibeah, Ramah, Jebus, Bethel, and the Rock of Rimmon.
7. Explain allusions—
 - (i.) Only lodge not in the street.
 - (ii.) Up and let us be going.
 - (iii.) They are smitten down before us as at the first.
 - (iv.) All these were men of valour.
 - (v.) Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

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The student ought to make himself well acquainted with the map of Palestine, by carefully filling up several outline maps and marking the position of the following places, &c., mentioned in the "Book of Judges":—

PLACES.

WEST OF JORDAN.

In the territory of Simeon—Beersheba, Hormah, Ramath-lehi.

„ „ Judah—Arad, Bethlehem, Debir, Hebron, Kirjath-jearim.

„ „ Benjamin—Bethel, Beeroth, Gibeah, Gilgal, Jericho, Jerusalem (Jebus), Mizpeh, Ramah.

„ „ Ephraim—Bethel, Gezer, Pirathon, Shechem, Shiloh.

„ „ Manasseh—Abel-meholah, Bezek, Ophrah, Thebez.

„ „ Issachar—Beth-shean, Megiddo, Meroz, Taanach.

„ „ Zebulon—Aijalon, Bethlehem, Kitron, Nahalol.

„ „ Asher—Accho, Aphek, Achzib, Dor, Beth-rehob.

„ „ Naphtali—Beth-anath, Beth-shemesh, Hazor, Kedesh.

„ „ Dan (S.)—Aijalon, Eshtaol, Timnath, Zorah.

„ „ Dan (N.)—Laish (or Dan).

EAST OF JORDAN.

In the territory of Manasseh—Mizpeh.

„ „ Gad—Jabesh-Gilead, Penuel, Succoth.

„ „ Reuben—Aroer, Heshbon, Jahaz.

THE LORDSHIPS OF THE PHILISTINES.

Ashdod (called Azotus in the New Testament), Ashkelon, Ekron, Gaza, and Gath.

MOUNTAINS.

Ephraim, Gerizim, Gilead, and Hermon.

RIVERS.

Arnon, Jabbok, Jordan, and Kishon.

SHORT SUMMARY.

| JUDGE. | No. of years he ruled. | OPPRESSOR. | IMPORTANT PASSAGES. |
|--|------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Othniel , son of Kenaz; nephew of Caleb, whose daughter Achsah he married as a reward for his successful capture of Kirjath-sepher (or Debir). | 25 | Cushan - Rishathaim , king of Mesopotamia. | |
| 2. Ehud , son of Gera, a left-handed Benjamite. | | Eglon , king of the Moabites, assassinated by Ehud. | And he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. (Chap. iii., 16.) |
| 3. Shamgar , son of Anath. | | Philistines . | Slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad. (Chap. iii., 31.) |
| 4. Deborah and Barak . The former, the wife of Lapidoth, and a prophetess of Mt. Ephraim; the latter, the son of Abinoam. | | Jabin , king of Hazor. Sisera, his captain, was slain by Jael. | Song of Deborah . (Chap. v.) For he was fast asleep and weary. (Chap. iv., 21.) |
| 5. Gideon (or Jerubbaal), the son of Joash of Abiezer. | | Midianites , under their chiefs Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, Zalmunna. | Alas, O Lord! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. (Chap. vi., 22.) The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. (Chap. vii., 18.) Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer. (Chap. viii., 2.) For as the man is, so is his strength. (Chap. viii., 21.) As a dog lappeth. (Chap. vii., 5.) |
| 6. Abimelech , the son of Gideon; he conspired with the Shechemites and slew 70 of his brethren; he met his own death at Thebez. | 23 | | Jotham's parable . (Chap. ix., 7.) What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done. (Chap. ix., 48.) Draw the sword and save me, that men may not say of me, A woman slew him. (Chap. ix., 54.) Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men. (Chap. ix., 36.) |
| 7. Tola , the son of Puah, dwelt at Shamir in Mt. Ephraim. | | | |

| JUDGE. | No. of years he ruled. | OPPRESSOR. | IMPORTANT PASSAGES. |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 8. Jair , a Gileadite. | 22 | The Ammonites. | Jephthah's vow and its fulfilment. Did not ye hate me and expel me out of my father's house? (Chap. xi., 7.) Say now Shibboleth. (Chap. xii., 6.) |
| 9. Jephthah , a Gileadite. He was banished by his countrymen, but returned on condition that, if he delivered them from the hands of the Ammonites, he should become their ruler. Defeated the Ephraimites who had been haughty in their manner towards him and that without reason. | 6 | | |
| 10. Ibzan , of Bethlehem. | 7 | | |
| 11. Elon , of Zebulun. | 10 | | |
| 12. Abdon , son of Hillel, a Pirathonite. | 8 | | |
| 13. Samson , a Danite, the son of Manoah, and a Nazarite from his birth. | 20 | The Philistines. | Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. (Chap. xiii., 12.) We shall surely die, because we have seen God. (Chap. xiii., 22.) Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. (Chap. xiv., 14.) What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion. (Chap. xiv., 18.) If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. (Chap. xiv., 18.) And he smote them hip and thigh. (Chap. xv., 8.) And now shall I die for thirst. (Chap. xv., 18.) Let me die with the Philistines. (Chap. xvi., 30.) |

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