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A
POPULAR INTRODUCTION
TO THE BOOKS OF
JOSHUA, JUDGES, AND RUTH.

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A

POPULAR INTRODUCTION

TO THE BOOKS OF

JOSHUA, JUDGES, AND RUTH.

BY THE

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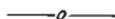
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INTRODUCTION.



'Though we cannot determine with certainty the authors of the historical books, yet we may rest assured that the Jews, who had already received inspired books from the hands of Moses, would not have admitted any others as of equal authority, if they had not been fully convinced that the writers were supernaturally assisted.'

THE books of the Old Testament to which the title of historical is given—yet both the Pentateuch and the prophetic writings are, to some extent, historical also—are twelve in number. The ancient Jews called certain of these books 'The Former Prophets.' The transactions recorded in them, extending from the death of Moses to the Reformation of Nehemiah after the return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity, cover the long period of about one thousand years. These writings are the great storehouse of our information on the world's history during the whole of this time, for, with the exception of traditions relating to the Assyrians and Egyptians, of information derived from Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, of some doubtful fragments of Phœnician records, of references in Herodotus, himself coeval with Nehemiah, and, to a less extent, in Thucydides, we have very little to depend upon for our knowledge of mankind in those days, apart from the Scriptural account.

In these books we possess a history which is ancient, true, and Divine ;—a history which shows us how God's Church of old was 'persecuted, but not forsaken,' 'perplexed, but not in despair ;' a Church far indeed from perfection, and not free from the taint of sin, but still a Church which, preserved and developed under different dispensations by God's providential care, through the long series of subsequent ages, will pass at length from the Church militant on earth to the Church triumphant in heaven.

There can be no doubt that the Jews, from the early dawn of their theocracy, preserved authentic and contemporary memoirs of the transactions that occurred ; memoirs written when the events were fresh in their memory, and kept with the greatest care as treasured heirlooms of their race. The Hebrew race, as God's chosen people, to whom He gave laws, a polity, and an inheritance, were more likely than any other people to hand down from father to son such valued records of the Divine dealings with them as a nation.

Separated, as they were, from other races by a rigid boundary-line, they would naturally cling with all the greater tenacity to these records of a theocracy which made them what they were, and impressed upon them its broad seal, in token of their being an elect and peculiar people.

Some such records are definitely referred to in the historical books. We find, for example, allusions to the Book of Jasher in Josh. x. 13 and 2 Sam. i. 18 ; and more frequently to the 'Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah,' and also to the Books of Gad, Nathan, and Iddo.

Such writings as these were, we can scarcely doubt, made much use of in the composition of the historical books of the Old Testament. There is nothing derogatory to, or inconsistent with, the true idea of inspiration, in supposing that the authors of the several books, under the guiding hand of God, and instructed by Him, made use of these authentic records of their national and theocratic history, and interwove them with the narrative which they themselves were inspired to write. Nor, again, is it likely that a people, already in possession of a book of the Law given to them by Moses the servant of God, and accustomed therefore to weigh the credentials of such inspired writings, and to form a true estimate of their value, would be disposed to give a light and careless assent and acknowledgment to works which laid claim to the high honour of coming from God, but would carefully investigate their claims, and demand a satisfactory evidence of their Divine authority, and would hesitate, with a godly fear and a scrupulous care, before receiving them into their canon on a par with that fivefold volume which they cherished with so reverent an estimation and with so devout a respect.

The importance of the historical books is increased in our estimation when we observe what a light the history of David, with all his troubles, domestic and national, sheds upon the Psalms, and how necessary a knowledge of the history of the people is in unfolding the mysteries of prophecy, which, in so many cases, has a prior reference to the events of the national history of the Jews, and looks forward from its earthly and temporal standpoint to its still distant and future accomplishment in the Messiah Himself,

or in the Messiah's kingdom. We may trace, too, in these historical books the working of God's providence in the life of a nation as well as in that of the individual; we may discover in them the blessings which flow from obedience to the commands of God, and the curse which disobedience brings down upon a people; we may see mirrored in those inspired pages the faithfulness of God in the fulfilment and execution of promises and predictions, which He made in times past to His people Israel; and we may also note how the observance of a strict morality and the maintenance of true religion tend to national honour and national happiness.

Nor are these the only reasons which give a just value and importance to the historical books of the Old Testament. In these days of critical inquiry and rationalistic handling of the Word of God and of everything sacred, it is of still more importance to pay the greatest attention to the history of the Old Testament. That history professes to give a just and true account of the development of Divine revelation during the different ages over which those sacred records extend. If, therefore, modern criticism rejects as irrational and unscientific the idea of revelation altogether, it will naturally endeavour to undermine the truth of the histories which testify to such a revelation, and will please itself in striving to reduce to the rank of mythical fables and legendary romance those writings which, to the eye of devout faith, are throughout instinct and impregnated with the Spirit of God. It is clear, therefore, that if such a vague and mythical character could be justly given to Old Testament history, we should be left with no firm, reliable, objective basis, upon which either faith

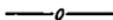
or theology could take its stand. No foundation would remain, and a dim haze of uncertainty, conjecture, and subjective conceptions would hang over all the first principles of religious belief. For it is impossible to dissociate the Christian from the former dispensation. They are indissolubly linked together.¹ If, therefore, the veracity or inspiration of the books of the Old Testament be called in question, or if those sacred histories are regarded as mere legendary and mythical fables, it will follow, as a natural sequence, that the foundation, or at least one of the foundations, on which the Christian covenant depends, will receive a shock from which it will with difficulty recover. Hence it has been well said,² that 'the great want of our Church, at the present day, is a clear comprehension of the meaning of the Old Testament, in its fulness and purity, in order that the God of Israel may again be universally recognised as the Eternal God, whose faithfulness is unchangeable, the one living and true God, who performed all that He did to Israel for our instruction and salvation, having chosen Abraham and his seed to be His people, to preserve His revelations, that from him the whole world might receive salvation, and in him all the families of the earth be blessed.'

¹ 'As a matter of historic fact,' remarks Professor Stanley Leathes (*Bampton Lectures*, Lect. i. p. 37), 'the Old Testament has formed the basis for another set of writings very different from its own in style and character, and that in a way that is altogether without parallel. It was the literary progenitor of the New Testament; and but for the Old Testament as a foundation, the New could never have been written.'

² By Keil, *Preface to Commentary on Joshua*.

JOSHUA.

JOSHUA.



'The great work of Joshua's life was more exciting but less hopeful than that of Moses. He gathered the first-fruits of the autumn harvest where his predecessor had sown the seed in spring. It was a high and hopeful task to watch beside the cradle of a mighty nation, and to train its early footsteps in laws which should last for centuries. And it was a fit end to a life of expectation to gaze with longing eyes from Pisgah upon the Land of Promise. But no such brightness gleamed upon the calm close of Joshua's life. Solemn words, and dark with foreboding, fell from him as he sat "under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord in Shechem." The excitement of his battles was past; and there had grown up in the mind of the pious leader a consciousness that it is the tendency of prosperity and success to make a people wanton and worldly-minded, idolaters in spirit if not in act, and to alienate them from God.'

REV. W. T. BULLOCK, *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 1144.

I. THE Book of Joshua¹ contains an account of events which probably occurred during a space of about twenty-five years, from B.C. 1451 to 1426, though some writers have confined the period to seventeen years, while others have extended it to thirty years. Before treating of the authorship, authenticity, scope, or any kindred question, it may be well to sketch somewhat fully the contents of the book. There has been a tolerably general consensus of theologians to a clearly-marked threefold division being traceable in this book. We have an account of the conquest of Canaan, of the

¹ Called in LXX. 'Ἰησοῦς Ναυή or 'Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ναυή; and in the Vulgate, 'Liber Josue;' Hebraice, 'Jehosua.'

distribution of the conquered land, and of the farewell addresses of Joshua.

1. The *conquest of Canaan* by the Israelites as given in chaps. i.-xii.,—a narrative which flows on in an unbroken and continuous strain, without pause or hesitation.

- (1.) Joshua's call ; his confirmation as commander of the people and as successor to Moses ; God's promise to him of assistance and support ; together with the preparations for the people's entrance into the land (chap. i.).
- (2.) The mission of the two spies from Shittim (*the Acacias*) to view Jericho ; their concealment in safety by Rahab (through *faith*, Heb. xi. 31), with whom they made a covenant ; and their return (chap. ii.).
- (3.) The miraculous crossing on the morrow of the broad flood of the Jordan (swollen by the melting of the snows of Lebanon) by Joshua, —God making 'a way' for His 'ransomed to pass over,'—the ark now preceding them ; signalized by the setting up of twelve stones in the midst of the channel of the river, and the setting up of twelve other stones in Gilgal as a memorial, which were taken out of the Jordan (chaps. iii., iv.).
- (4.) The renewal of the covenant of circumcision at Gilgal (*i.e.* 'rolling,' marg.), where the reproach of Egypt was 'rolled away ;' the celebration of the Passover there ; the cessation of manna ; and the appearance of the 'Captain of the Lord's host' to Joshua near Jericho (chap. v.).
- (5.) The miraculous capture of Jericho ('the City of Palm Trees,' Deut. xxxiv. 3 ; the greatest

- city of the Canaanitish race, beautiful for situation, 'high and fenced up to heaven,' the 'key' of Palestine), according to the instructions given by God to Joshua respecting its siege; the ark again taking the lead ('by *faith*,' it is said, Heb. xi. 30, 'the walls of Jericho fell down'); the city's doom; the curse on him who rebuilt it (cf. 1 Kings xvi. 34); and the preservation of Rahab and her family (chap. vi.).
- (6.) The repulse of the Israelites, to the great grief of Joshua, by the men of Ai, in consequence of the sin of Achan, who, by means of instructions received from God, is discovered, and stoned to death in the valley of Achor (i.e. *trouble*); after this Joshua, encouraged by God, took Ai by stratagem, slew the inhabitants, burnt the city, and hanged the king (chaps. vii., viii. 1-29).
- (7.) The renewal of the covenant in Mount Ebal, where Joshua built an altar of whole stones, wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, and between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim read in the hearing of the people the blessings and cursings of the law (chap. viii. 30-35).
- (8.) The destruction of the *southern confederacy* against Joshua, which consisted of all the Canaanitish peoples there, with the exception of the Gibeonites, who, through stratagem, made a league, but are condemned to perpetual bondage in connection with the tabernacle, though their lives were spared in consequence of the oath which Joshua had taken. Five kings, headed by Adoni-zedek (*the Lord of*

Righteousness), king of Jerusalem, who made an onset on Gibeon in consequence of the league, are, after a forced march, attacked by Joshua, who generously comes to the aid of the perfidious Gibeonites, at the eventful battle of Beth-horon (i.e. *House of Caves*), where, 'great stones from heaven' falling upon them,—the sun and the moon standing still in heaven at the command of Joshua, as described in the Book of Jasher,—they were miraculously defeated, there being 'no day like it, before it or after it,' and driven out of their hiding-place at Makkedah and hanged; seven more kings were afterwards utterly defeated before Joshua's return to the camp at Gilgal the master of half of Palestine (chaps. ix., x.).

- (9.) Then followed in rapid succession—no breathing time being allowed to his enemies—a like destruction of the *northern confederacy of kings* (at the Land's End of Palestine),—a confederacy gathered from every quarter with their hosts, 'even as the sand which is upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many,'—by Joshua, who fell like a thunderbolt upon them at the waters of Merom (i.e. *The High Lake*; cf. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 387), chasing them even to the gates of 'great Zidon' and the valley of Mizpeh; Hazor (i.e. *the Fortress*), whose king was Jabin (*the Wise*), was taken and burnt; the war lasting a 'long time' (which is said in the marg. to be five years, from B.C. 1450 to 1445), (chap. xi. 1–20).
- (10.) The Anakims, a giant race, the 'old terror of

Israel,' were cut off in the south, except in the Philistine cities, when the land 'rested from war' (chaps. xi. 21-23).

- (11.) A recapitulation of the conquests of Moses on the eastern side of the Jordan, and also of the conquest of Joshua over thirty-one kings on the western side of the river (chap. xii.).

2. The *distribution* of the conquered land (chaps. xiii.-xxii.),—an account which has not inaptly been compared with the domesday-book of the Norman conquerors of England.

- (1.) Joshua, now 'old and stricken in years,' at God's command, makes a general division of the land, which was not even yet in possession, amongst the different tribes; an account of the distribution made by Moses; the slaughter of Balaam; the limits of the inheritance of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh in Eastern Palestine (chap. xiii.).

- (2.) The nine-and-a-half tribes were to have their inheritance by lot; but Caleb the son of Jephunneh preferred a claim for Hebron (where rested the bones of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), grounded on the promise of Moses, which claim the men of Judah supported and Joshua granted (chap. xiv.).

- (3.) In Western Palestine the lot of Judah was first assigned, consisting of different cities and villages in the south, in the valley, in the mountain, and in the wilderness, which included the portion of Caleb, whose daughter Achsah was given in marriage to Othniel for his valour; the Jebusites not being expelled from Jerusalem (chap. xv.).

- (4.) The lot of the children of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh,—the Canaanites not being expelled from Gerar,—the sons of Joseph, on their complaint, obtaining another lot (chap. xvi. and xvii.).
- (5.) The lot of the children of Benjamin and their cities; the tabernacle set up at Shiloh; the slackness of the Israelites in going to possess the land (chap. xviii.).
- (6.) The lots of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan, together with the inheritance in Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim given by the grateful Israelites to Joshua (chap. xix.).
- (7.) The appointment of the six cities of refuge, viz. Kedesh, Shechem, Kirjath-Arba or Hebron; and, on the other side Jordan, Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan (chap. xx.).
- (8.) The appointment of forty-eight cities to the Levites,—the cities of the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites (chap. xxi. 1-42).
- (9.) All the land given unto Israel, which God had promised to their fathers; every good thing came to pass (chap. xxi. 43 ad fin.).
- (10.) The dismissal of the two-and-a-half tribes—the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh—to the land of their possession beyond the Jordan, after the faithful discharge of their duty, with an exhortation and a blessing; they build a great altar on the borders of the Jordan, not for sacrifice, but for a witness; they satisfy their brethren on this point, who had at once sent an embassy with a holy zeal

to make inquiries, since they feared in the erection of the altar an act of idolatry (chap. xxii.).

3. The *farewell addresses* of Joshua (chaps. xxiii. and xxiv.).

(1.) His first address, in which—when ‘waxed old and stricken in age,’ and ‘going the way of all the earth’—he exhorts them, by the consideration of God’s former benefits, by His promises, and by threatenings, to ‘cleave unto the Lord’ (chap. xxiii.).

(2.) His second address at Shechem (hallowed as the spot where God’s promises were first made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 6–9), and associated also with the history of Jacob (Gen. xxxv. 4) and of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32), in which—apparently in a still more solemn and public manner than in the first, and perhaps with a somewhat sorrowful prevision of evil and apostasy in the future—Joshua reviews historically the benefits they had received at the hands of God from the time of Terah; renews the covenant between them and God, which he writes in a book, setting up also a great stone as a witness, ‘under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord’ (chap. xxiv. 1–28).

(3.) A supplementary portion, containing the account of the death of Joshua at one hundred and ten years old,—his sun going down bright and glorious,—and his burial at Timnath-serah, his inheritance; also how Israel served the Lord during the life of Joshua and the elders that overlived him; the burial in Shechem of Joseph’s bones, which had been brought up out of Egypt; the death of Eleazar the son

of Aaron, and his burial in a hill in Mount Ephraim that pertained to his son Phinehas (chap. xxiv. 29-33).¹

II. From this sketch of the contents of the Book of Joshua we can more readily form a just idea of the *design* with which it was written. It is not to be regarded simply as a biography of him whose name it bears; nor as a mere continuation of the narrative contained in the Pentateuch, though closely connected with it; nor as a general ascription of praise to God for His mercies; nor as a mere history of the theocracy under Joshua: but rather it was intended to point out, by historical evidence, God's truthfulness in fulfilling His promises, in the 'record of the conquest and distribution of the land, which the Lord gave to His chosen people as their possession, that they might dwell therein, serving their God and Lord in truth and love,' in conformity with His promises made to Abraham (Gen. xiii. 15), Isaac (xxvi. 4), Jacob (xxxv. 12), and Joseph (l. 24), as well as to Moses himself (Ex. iii. 8). It is, indeed, a record of divine love in the preservation of the chosen race in the midst of all the dangers and trials to which they were exposed in entering into the land of their inheritance. And thus as, in the New Testament, Canaan is regarded as a type of the heavenly rest, so the different conflicts of the Israelites have always been supposed to represent under a figure the trials and conflicts of God's children in every age of the Church's history.

But this book contains not only the promise of help

¹ Generally, on the contents of the Book of Joshua, see Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*; Keil's *Commentary on Joshua*; Conder's *Handbook of the Bible*; and Dr. Maclear's *Class Book of Old Testament History*.

from God till the conquest of the land should be effected (i. 5), but also the narrative of the fulfilment of that promise in the subjugation of the country ; not only the promise of the distribution of the land amongst the different tribes (i. 6), but, moreover, an account of the mode in which that distribution was actually carried out.

It served also the subsidiary, though important purpose, both of chronicling and preserving the division of the different tribes one from the other, and, as a consequence, of marking clearly the distinction between the different families, so that the genealogy of the future Messiah might be more easily and readily ascertained.

Accordingly, this book is not a mere appendix to the Pentateuch, nor a simple introduction to the history which follows, but stands alone, perfect and complete in itself, with its own peculiar character and design deeply stamped upon it. Linked, no doubt, as it is with the transactions that preceded it,—that connection being, perhaps, indicated by the conjunctive particle with which it commences ; linked, no doubt, as it also is, with the book that succeeds it,—for a similar conjunctive particle is found at the beginning of the Book of Judges,—yet, nevertheless, the Book of Joshua has an individuality, a completeness, and an independent character of its own, which can scarcely fail to strike the notice of the attentive and careful reader. This independent character of the work may be indirectly traced in the fact that the author has himself given a full and complete account of circumstances which Moses had previously narrated in the Pentateuch, as, for example, the conquest of the land beyond the Jordan by Moses, and its division of two-and-a-half tribes, and the account of the appointment of the cities of refuge.

Nor is this independent character of the book less

obvious in its *style*. From the simplicity and fixedness of the Hebrew language, as well as from the fact that the author of the Book of Joshua treats of subjects kindred to those which are treated of in the Pentateuch, it is obvious that in very many respects a marked similarity must naturally be traceable in the phraseology of the Books of Moses and Joshua; but still a careful study has clearly shown that there are peculiarities of diction¹ and style in the Book of Joshua which mark it off, not only from the Pentateuch, but also from the historical books that follow it, between which it holds a middle place;² and, moreover, that it is free from those *archaisms* with which, as has been already remarked, the Pentateuch abounds, while, at the same time, there is an absence of all Chaldee phraseology and expressions of a later date.

The marked connection which is observable between the Book of Joshua and the Pentateuch is—we cannot doubt—attributable in no slight degree to the close intercourse and familiar intimacy which subsisted between the great legislator and his chosen successor,—an intimacy paternal on the one side and reverential on the other,—an intimacy of so practical and influential a character, that it has been justly remarked, that the

¹ For instances of a peculiarity of diction, see Keil's *Commentary*, Introduction, pp. 25, 26; and for further illustrations, cf. *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. ii. p. 11, notes. It has been remarked by Dr. Pusey (*Lectures on Daniel*, p. 310) that, 'on the ground of language, the Book of Joshua must have been very early; for its language has so much in common with the Pentateuch, although the Pentateuch has marks of greater antiquity, having *archaisms* which the Book of Joshua has not, and not having language which the Book of Joshua has.'

² The Book of Joshua appeals to the Pentateuch as then extant, and notices the fulfilment of predictions and promises of the earlier books (cf. Josh. i. 8, viii. 30-35, xi. 15, 20, 23, xiv. 2-9, xx. 2, xxi. 43-45, xxii. 1-9, xxiii. 6-16, xxiv. 2-10, 19, 20).

great shadow of Moses was projected over the whole of Joshua's life.

Again, the history of Joshua cannot be viewed with fairness simply as the record of a state of such small and insignificant dimensions as the land of Canaan,—a territory of about one-third the size of Scotland,¹ with a Jewish population which did not exceed in the time of Joshua two-and-a-half millions.

If we confined our view to this one point, we might fairly regard the grand array of miracles which ushered in the migration of such a people to such a state as almost an incongruous display of divine power. But when we view those miracles as a continuation of the long chain of wonder-works which marked the passage of the Israelites, as God's chosen people, in their exodus from Egypt, through the Red Sea, and across the waste wilderness for so many years; when we reflect that the life of the Hebrew nation was bound up with the preservation of true religion throughout the world; when we trace in each stage of their national career the fulfilment of prophecies and promises which had been made in the past, and learn that, in like manner, their history was typical of other and more important events which would occur in the future; when we thus mark the importance of the real issues at stake in the entrance of God's chosen people into the land of Canaan, our astonishment ceases at the mighty wonders which accompanied their course, and they no longer can be regarded as a needless display of divine omnipotence. The grandeur and importance of the end proposed sanctions and justifies the means employed, and the miracles no longer seem isolated or out of place, but naturally range themselves as constituent parts of the long roll of

¹ About 10,900 square miles, as compared with 30,460.

supernatural interpositions which commenced with the beginning of all things, and which will last till the close of the history of man.

Moreover, as regards the history of the chosen people themselves, we perceive a gradual development, and an orderly and systematic unfolding of the plot of the great spiritual drama of this world. As Moses in the Pentateuch gave us the Book of the Law, which was to regulate the theocracy, so, in the Book of Joshua, we have the bright portraiture of God's faithfulness to His word spoken in times past, as well as a figurative description—a 'Typical Gospel'—of what Christ, who was Joshua's antitype, would do in the future for the benefit of the chosen people of God. Hence the Book of Joshua becomes a record of events connected with the literal and the spiritual Israel in time past, present, and future.

We shall look in vain, as was equally the case in the Book of Genesis, for a systematic history of the rise and fall of important dynasties, or of the life of individual kings and rulers, or for a scientific account of the growth of civilisation or the literature of the world at large. This is not the standpoint from which the history before us is to be viewed. The events of this world's history, great though they may be in themselves, and when estimated from a secular point of view, will be seen to be passed over either entirely, or with only a scant and passing reference, if they do not bear upon the accomplishment of the great designs of God in the development of His spiritual kingdom; while, on the other hand, the biographies of individuals whom the world would lightly esteem, and circumstances and events of an apparently minute and even trivial character, receive far more attention, and stand forth in the

narrative in much more prominent relief, since they are connected with the divine plans for the training, education, and future restoration and salvation of the human race.

But as the result of the completeness of the Book of Joshua, we may also observe a *unity* throughout it of the most marked kind. This unity flows from the simple aim which the writer has placed before him ; and also from the close interdependence and connection of the different parts of the book, as traceable in the analysis of its contents already given ; the division and distribution of the tribes following in close sequence after the conquest of the land.

We may add that objections grounded upon the smallness of the territory whose history is recorded, or of the population who were destined to tenant it, give way before the incalculable importance of the events of which that history is either typical, or of which it is the seed and germ ; a seed destined to be developed into the great and mighty tree under whose shadow the nations of the world shall seek for shelter and repose.¹

We must look, therefore, not merely at the geographical bearings of our subject, nor at its purely historical character, but endeavour to estimate aright the deep inner, spiritual, and eternal importance which it possesses when viewed in its true proportions and with the eye of faith. It is when we thus reflect upon the apparent insignificance of the theatre on which this great drama was performed, that we are able to read

¹ Compare the parallel beautifully drawn out by Bishop Wordsworth between the *intellectual* influence of Attica and the *spiritual* influence of Palestine, notwithstanding the territorial diminutiveness of each state (*Introduction to Joshua* ; and also Bishop Wordsworth's *Greece*, p. 65 et seq.).

all the more clearly, because brought more readily under our glance, the lessons for our guidance which this grand display of divine power, wisdom, and mercy was designed to teach.

III. Having thus traced out the contents of the Book of Joshua, and the design with which it was apparently written, we are naturally led to inquire, Who was its *author*?

To this question many answers have been given. A similar uncertainty (it may be remarked in passing) prevails respecting the authorship of the historical Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

1. Various conjectures have been hazarded both as to the author and time of the composition of this book, critics differing even to the extent of 1000 years as to the date when it was written. Thus Calvin has suggested Eleazar as the author; Matthew Henry has ascribed the book to Jeremiah; Lightfoot, to Phinehas; Van Til, to Samuel; De Wette, to some one of the age of David; Keil, to one of the elders who outlived Joshua, though he thinks that the materials were for the most part supplied by Joshua himself; Von Lengerke, to some one living in the days of Josiah; Davidson, to some one in the time of Samuel, or even later; Ewald, to some one towards the end of the reign of Manasseh; and Masius, Spinoza, Le Clerc, Mauer, and others, to some one living after the Babylonish captivity.¹

2. But, on the whole, the arguments for Joshua being its author are stronger and more conclusive, not only from internal evidence, but also from the more general

¹ See Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, 'Joshua,' by Rev. W. T. Bullock, vol. i. p. 146, and Keil, *Introduction to Joshua*, Introduction, § 3, p. 30 et seq.

consent of theologians and commentators in all times, than for any other person. Thus the very testimony in favour of Joshua indirectly weakens, if it does not set aside, the testimony for any other authorship.

To Joshua as the author of the book we have the testimony of the Jewish talmudical writers, of many of the Christian Fathers, of Witsius, and of a long array of learned authors and critics in modern times, *e.g.* Gerhard, Diodati, Huet, Alber, Bishops Patrick, Tomline, Gray, and Dr. A. Clarke; also Robinson, König, Hottinger, Carpzov, and Hävernick, for the first half of the book.

In favour of Joshua as the author of the book we have evidence of the following nature:—

(1.) Various narratives of intercourse specially held by him with God, which could scarcely have come from any other source except himself. Thus God is said to have spoken to Joshua (i. 1, iii. 7, iv. 2, v. 2–9, vi. 2, vii. 10, viii. 1, x. 8, xi. 6, xiii. 1, 2, xx. 1); and Joshua is said to have held intercourse with the ‘Captain of the Lord’s host,’ in v. 13.

(2.) No one was so well fitted as Joshua, by his peculiar position, the office which he held, and the knowledge he possessed, to have written the book which contained the account of all the great deeds in which he took so prominent a part.

(3.) And not only so, but all the minute particulars respecting time, and place, and circumstances,—many of them having an important bearing upon the history of the different tribes,—are in favour of some one having written it who was himself a participator in the events, and a witness of the circumstances described. The book is written with the vivid force and power which marks the natural and unconscious description of an

eye-witness writing under a pervading sense of the divine presence.

(4.) To this we may add the use of the first person of the personal pronoun in chap. v. 1, 6, *i.e.* 'Until *we* were passed over,' and 'The land that He would give *us*.' It is, of course, open to any one to say that the writer *identifies* himself with the events recorded, and so falls into the use of the *first* person ; but still, from the general simplicity of the historical narrative, it is far more natural to suppose that it indicates actual presence on the part of the writer, as a similar use of the first person is usually thought to indicate the presence of St. Luke as the companion of St. Paul in Acts xvi. 10 et seq.

(5.) It is, moreover, evident that Joshua did actually write a narrative of one circumstance mentioned in the book, since it is said (chap. xxiv. 26), 'Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of the Lord ;' and if he wrote a description of one transaction, it may not unreasonably be inferred that he might have written more. In the above passage we have a parallel description to that which is given concerning Moses in Deut. xxxi., where the incident is, in like manner, followed by the account of the writer's death.

(6.) Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that as Moses wrote an account of the great events in which he took so leading a part, so his servant and successor in the work would naturally be led, after the example of his great master, to do the same in relation to those important transactions in which he himself so conspicuously shared.

(7.) Moreover, the whole book breathes the spirit and is impregnated (so to speak) with the atmosphere of the Mosaic law,—a circumstance that furnishes a presumptive evidence in favour of its having been written by one

so intimately and personally associated as Joshua was with the mediator of that covenant.

(8.) And, once more, it may be remarked that all the events recorded in the book are in harmony with the times in which Joshua lived, and in subjective agreement with the character and position of Joshua himself, and that in many cases they are corroborated by traditions which obtained among heathen nations, and which have been handed down by trustworthy historians.¹ Nor is it an unfair supposition that Joshua of all men would be naturally most desirous of presenting his last addresses and exhortations to the people in a permanent form.

Such, then, is the nature of the evidence in favour of Joshua as the author of the book which bears his name,—an evidence which would appear to give a decided preponderance on his side over all the other persons who have been supposed to have written it.

IV. Joshua,² then, being fairly presumed to have been the author of the book, deeply moves our sympathies and arrests our interest, not only from what he was in himself, but also from the fact of his being so evident and signal a type of Christ.

¹ It has been remarked that many fables, legends, and traditions in pagan authors and countries have evidently been derived from this book; *e.g.* the fable of the Phœnician Hercules; the myth of Phaeton driving the chariot of the sun for one day; the fable of the overthrow of the giants; the tempest of stones by which Jupiter was said to have overwhelmed the enemies of Hercules in Arim, which is exactly the country where Joshua fought with the Anakims. Cf. also the passage of Procopius (from a Phœnician inscription), 'We are they who flee from the face of Jesus (*i.e.* Joshua) the robber, the son of Nave.' (See Horne, *Introd.* vol. iv. p. 36.)

² יְהוֹשֻׁעַ; 'Ἰησοῦς; Josua, *i.e.* 'Whose help is Jehovah,' Gesen.; or rather, 'God the Saviour,' or 'God's salvation.' *Hoshea* or *Osheta* = 'Welfare' or 'Salvation.' (See, by all means, on name and its change Pearson on *Creed*, art. ii. init.)

1. In himself, Joshua the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim,¹ was eminently calculated to rivet the attention and claim for himself the respect and even the veneration of men in every age. As the intimate companion and associate of Moses, he was, like other great instruments who have been raised up at various times, eminently trained for the great work which he had to perform. From the time of his birth—which was probably contemporaneous with the flight of Moses into Midian—to that of his honoured death and public burial at Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim, at the ripe age of one hundred and ten years, when his sun sank calmly but gloriously, his recollections of the past were unlike those of most earthly warriors at their last hour,—for, during all those eventful years, no shadow of reproach or censure is cast upon his conduct or character. In this respect he is almost alone among the Old Testament worthies, and he stands out in signal and in glorious contrast to many of them, with no shadow to throw out in greater relief the ordinary brilliancy of his character, but all his conduct ‘equalized by one uniform pervading light.’

We see in him the fearless soldier, the accomplished general, the ‘foremost captain of his time,’—the calm and impartial judge,—the man of noble and awe-inspiring presence, of singular wisdom, of high and daring aspirations, of exalted aims, of untiring patience and perseverance, of manly straightforwardness, candour, and equity,—a ruler actuated by a spirit of the deepest piety,—the idol of his people, ‘magnified’ in the sight of all Israel by the power of working miracles as remarkable as those which Moses wrought,—moved by courage

¹ ‘Non’ in 1 Chron. vii. 27, where he is called Jehoshua. We know not his mother’s name.

built on faith,—guided by a consummate strategical skill in closest combination with heavenly aid and suggestion,—admitted to listen to the words of God and privileged to see the vision of the Almighty,—manifesting an unfailing obedience to and devout reverence for Jehovah,—showing a singular gentleness in his conduct towards those beneath him, or those who had lapsed into sin,—deeply convinced that he was but an instrument in God's hand,—utterly free from all egotism and every form of selfishness—

‘ And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.’

No wonder, then, that with such a galaxy of attractive features in his character,—a combination of virtues, graces, and excellences almost unparalleled,—Joshua has always fastened upon the imagination of men, and in the days of chivalry became an object of regard and a subject of song, as the blameless hero and the fearless knight—*sans peur et sans reproche*.

We are furnished in Scripture with many details of his long and distinguished life. ‘The future captain of invading hosts grew up,’ it has been said, ‘a slave in the brick-fields of Egypt. Born about the time when Moses fled into Midian, he was a man of nearly forty years when he saw the ten plagues, and shared in the hurried triumph of the exodus.’

He is first brought, somewhat abruptly, before us as having been chosen and appointed by Moses to command the Israelites at Rephidim against Amalek (Ex. xvii. 9),—a work requiring courage, judgment, and discretion, which he admirably performed.

We see him next acting as Moses' ‘minister’ when the great legislator first ascended Mount Sinai, the Mount

of God (Ex. xxiv. 13 and xxxiii. 11), to receive the Tables of the Law, and as addressing him (when the forty days of waiting were over) on his descent,—wholly devoted himself to God's service in the tabernacle, and entirely untainted by the sin of apostasy in the matter of the golden calf (xxxii. 17), the first to catch the sounds of the ungodly revelry, and, with the instinct of a soldier, to exclaim, 'There is a noise of war in the camp,' being a witness at the same time of the indignation of Moses at the idolatry of the people when he dashed the Tables of the Law on the ground, breaking the sacred record into fragments.

We see him next forming one of the twelve sent from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the country of Canaan, under the name of Oshea,—then changed to Jehoshua, 'Jehovah's help,' the divine name JAH being added (Num. xiii. 8, 16),¹—and uniting with Caleb only, at the hazard of his life, in giving a favourable account of the land (Num. xiv. 6). Afterwards, when the long wandering in the wilderness was drawing to a close, we find him appointed by Moses, when the end of his days was near at hand, in the presence of Eleazar the priest, and invested in the most solemn manner with authority over the people (Num. xxvii. 18-23), and receiving a 'charge' from the lips of the legislator, now on the threshold of the grave (Deut. xxxi. 14-23).

We see him once again, at the express command of Jehovah, obtaining a commission in his eighty-fifth year (according to Josephus, *Antiq.* v. 1. 29), to lead the people (Josh. i. 1),—a commission which we have already seen, in the analysis of the book, he most faithfully, courageously, and wisely executed. Thus it has been said that the actual Israel, with their earthly head, never

¹ Called Hoshea in Deut. xxxii. 44.

came nearer to the ideal of the people of God than during the administration of Joshua.

2. But Joshua claims also, as we have before observed, our reverent regard, as being, not only in name, but also in the different features of his life and character,—‘with a closer similarity of outline than belongs, perhaps, to any other figure in the Old Testament,’—a remarkable *type* of Jesus Christ. Such has ever been the belief of Christ’s Church in all ages. And it is no less a matter of wonder than of thankfulness, how God in every dispensation has seen fit in His gracious dealings with His people to consult this ‘associating quality’ of our minds, and thus to appeal to the intellectual instincts implanted within us.

Care, no doubt, and caution are required in the interpretation of types. We must rigorously refrain from imagining typical mysteries to exist where none were intended, and must exercise a judicious control over the imaginative faculty. But we cannot go wrong if we follow the wise advice given us by Bishop Vanmildert.¹ ‘It is essential’ (he remarks) ‘to a type, in the scriptural acceptance of the term, that there should be a competent evidence of the divine *intention* in the correspondence between it and the antitype,—a matter not left to the imagination of the expositor to discover, but resting on some solid proof from Scripture itself that this was really the case.’

The typical resemblance of Joshua—who was called by a name identical with that of Jesus, that ‘name which is above every name’—is pointed out in Heb. iv. 8 (‘If *Jesus* (*i.e.* Joshua, marg.) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day’), as well as in Acts vii. 45 (‘which also our fathers that came

¹ Bampton Lectures, p. 239 ; cf. Bp. Marsh’s Lectures, Part iii. p. 115.

after brought in with *Jesus* into the possession of the Gentiles').

One of the early Fathers of the Christian Church, Justin Martyr,¹ regards the promise in Ex. xxiii. 20, 'Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared,' as pointing to Joshua; and the expression, 'My name is in him' (xxiii. 21), to refer to this, that his name should be the same as that of the Messiah. 'And well' (observes Bishop Hall²) 'doth Joshua succeed Moses. The very acts of God of old were *allegories*; where the law ends, there the Saviour begins; we may see the land of promise in the law; only Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament can bring us into it.'³

This typical relation between Joshua and Jesus is traceable in many ways. So Barrow (vol. v. p. 93) has remarked, 'The famous Jesus the son of Nun of all the ancient types did most exactly (in office and performance) represent and presignify the Messias.'

(1.) As Joshua did not take upon himself the office of leader, but was invested for it by the highest authority, receiving his commission from God; so our exalted Leader was constituted the Head of the Church by a particular designation; and therefore He declared that 'He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him' (John vi. 38; cf. Isa. xliiii. 1-6).

(2.) As Joshua is manifested to Israel at the river Jordan as their appointed commander, and God begins to magnify him there; so, in a similar way, when Jesus Christ comes up from the river Jordan, the heavens open, the Holy Ghost descends, and the voice of God

¹ In his *Dial. cum Tryph.*

² *Contemplations*, vol. i. p. 312.

³ Cf. August. v. ii. p. 2026, A.

declares, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' As Joshua at the Jordan chooses twelve men out of the people to carry twelve stones with them; so Jesus chooses His twelve apostles, those foundation-stones in the Church of God, whose names are in the twelve foundations of the wall of the holy city, the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 14). As Joshua led the Israelites across the deep and overflowing waters of the Jordan that barred their entrance into the land of promise; so Jesus leads His trusting people, who have wandered like weary pilgrims in this wilderness-world, through the 'valley of the shadow of death,' which is typified by the deep waters of the Jordan, into the promised land.

(3.) As Joshua led his host against enemies superior in numbers and in power, but with perfect confidence of eventual success, and was able to inspire them with some portion of the undaunted courage which he himself displayed; so will the Captain of our salvation lead those who gird themselves unto the spiritual battle before them, and who have enrolled themselves as faithful soldiers and servants unto their lives' end, unto victory, inspired with the same ardour which the Israelites felt, ready to 'fight the good fight of faith' against 'principalities and powers,' and 'faithful unto death,' and will at last present them with the 'crown of life.'

(4.) As the mighty walls of Jericho fall low, when Joshua compasses them for the seventh time with the ark of God's presence; so, as Jesus accomplished His course, the world-citadel falls low, for the will of man yields to the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ. As all resistance was in vain before Joshua, and all his enemies fell vanquished and overthrown; so, in like manner, under Christ as our illustrious

Commander, will all enemies be destroyed,—Satan, our inward lusts, and the affections of our natural hearts,—our victory being due, not to human prowess or philosophy, but through faith in Him.

(5.) As Joshua leads his people into the promised land, but they must fight for their possession of it; so Jesus, though He brings His own into the spiritual Canaan of His Church, did not come (as He tells us) to bring peace, but a sword; not one of His can (with His sanction) idly sit down and dream life away; but each one has life's battle—hard, earnest, and severe—to fight.

(6.) As Joshua, and not the great lawgiver, as the leader of the Israelites and the destroyer of their foes, brought his people into the promised land, and then divided the country amongst the various tribes; so, in like manner, does Joshua's Antitype, Jesus Christ, having, as Captain of our salvation, trodden Satan under foot, put His people into possession of the heavenly Canaan, lead the true Israel into God's presence, and prepare and assign mansions for them (cf. Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7; Eph. i. 11).

(7.) As Joshua, in the character of the successor of Moses, completed the work which his predecessor commenced; so, too, Jesus is revealed in the Gospel as justifying His people from that from which they could not be justified by the works of the Mosaic Law (Acts xiii. 39); and as Joshua renewed the rite of circumcision, so Jesus is the introducer and author of the true circumcision,—of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter (Rom. ii. 29).

(8.) As Rahab had faith in God, and preserved herself and her people from perishing with the unbelievers, and was incorporated with the Israelites; so Jesus has mercy in store not only for the Gentile world, but will,

in mercy, accept those whose sins have been grievous on their true repentance (Matt. xxi. 31); and again, as the men of Gibeon made a league with Joshua, and were taken under his protection, and defended from their enemies by him; so the Saviour will enter into a covenant of mercy with sinners who seek His aid and friendship, will receive them graciously, and save them from the violent rage of their banded enemies.

(9.) As Joshua, when his work was over, mounted the hill of Ephraim, and dwelt in his own possession, not falling to him, as to other of his brethren, by the lot, but as his own right yielded to him as the conqueror of all, and as he, before his departure, summoned to him on that Mount of Timnath-serah all the heads of the tribes, and set before them the grand future, which, if they clave stedfastly to God, would certainly be theirs; even so did the Captain of our salvation ascend to the heaven where He was before, His own by right, His own by conquest, after having bidden His immediate followers meet Him upon a mountain in Galilee, and there utter to them those words of wonder, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations' (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19).

It has been well said,¹ 'None can read the exploits of this faithful and devoted servant of the Church, and, comparing situations with his, not feel both humbled at his own inadequate use of his superior opportunities, and stimulated to push them to their full extent. To dare singly to stem a flood of ungodliness,—to maintain the truth through evil report and good report,—to scorn to accommodate his description of the

¹ Evans' *Scripture Biography*, vol. ii. pp. 53, 54. Cf. Robinson's *Scripture Characters*, i. p. 436 seq., and Bishop Wilberforce's *Heroes of Hebrew History*, 'Joshua.'

blessed land of the gospel to the corrupt inclination of the world,—to pull down the strongholds of sin, discomfit the armies, and take the camp of the adversary: these are but some of the good resolutions which will arise in his breast who turns over the pages of the history of Joshua with an humble and teachable spirit.'

V. But *objections* have been made against the authorship of the book being assigned to Joshua, based upon the following considerations. Such objections usually proceed upon the principle, that certain statements made in the book could not have been written till after the death of Joshua.

1. Now, as regards the passage at the close of the book (chap. xxiv. 29 et seq.), in which the death and burial of Joshua are described, it will be readily granted—as in the parallel case of Moses—that it must be referred to a different writer. And it is worthy of notice that Joshua is here called the 'Servant of God,' which indicates a different authorship, just as Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 5) is called the 'Servant of the Lord;' and, moreover, the style in each case differs from the style of the rest of the two books. Such an addition might most fairly have been made after the death of Joshua, without in the least degree weakening or disproving the assertion that Joshua was the author of the main portion of the work.

2. But again, objections have been urged against Joshua as the author of the book from the belief that, after a comparison of certain statements in Judges with parallel statements in Joshua, it would seem probable that the transactions mentioned as having taken place in the Book of Joshua must have taken place after Joshua's death.

These statements—which have been unhesitatingly pronounced by some critics to be discrepancies—refer chiefly to the conquests of Othniel and Caleb (chap. xv. 13–19), which, according to the account given of them in Judges (chap. i. 10–15), would appear to have happened after Joshua's death; and, moreover, in Judg. i. 8 we have an account given of the children of Judah having fought against Jerusalem, and taken, smitten, and burnt it; whereas in Josh. xv. 63 we read that the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, who are said to have dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

But it has been observed¹ in regard to the statements in Judges, that the first chapter of Judges is a very condensed tabular statement of the relative position of the children of Israel and the Canaanitish nations at the time of Joshua's death. Such a tabular statement (it has been said) can scarcely be distinct and comprehensive, if it be confined to a mere point of time like that of Joshua's death; and the impression has been common that there is some going back to a point a little earlier, as well as forward, perhaps, to a corresponding distance, so as to give a view of a period of several consecutive years. This recapitulatory kind of statement has been expressed on the part of our English translators by the use of the pluperfect tense (Judg. i. 8).

3. Again, we read of the children of Dan seizing the town of Leshem, and naming it Dan (Josh. xix. 47); while the longer account of the capture of the city, as given in Judges (chaps. xvii., xviii.), reveals to us a social condition which we should hardly (it has been supposed) have looked for till a time subsequent to the death of Joshua.

¹ See the *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, 'Joshua,' p. 966.

It is possible, indeed, that the expeditions recorded may have been *different* ones; but, if regarded as identical, it may be owing to some preconceived notions on our part that we deem them opposed to each other, and that the account in Judges reveals circumstances deemed incompatible with the state of affairs in the lifetime of Joshua. But the forebodings of idolatry uttered by Joshua in his last address (chap. xxiv.), as well as the idolatrous worship carried on by Micah, are a proof that the leaven of wickedness was at work even in the lifetime of Joshua. And, moreover, these Danites, placed in the outskirts of civilisation, lawless and predatory, could hardly constitute a fair representation of the state of society usually existing in Joshua's days. It is possible, also, that we are in the habit of placing the death of Joshua at too early a period. Though he may not have taken an active part in the government during the closing days of his life, and may have sought retirement during the last eighteen or twenty years of his life in his inheritance at Timnath-serah, yet he may have been fully competent to carry on his history to the very end of his days.

4. Once more, it has been objected that the phrase '*unto this day*,' which is said to occur fourteen times in this book, would seem to imply a longer period of time between the event and its narration than could have existed if Joshua were the author of the book. But a fallacy underlies this statement. The expression, for instance, in chap. xxii. 3 and in chap. xxiii. 8, 9, indicates a space of less than twenty-five years; in chap. iv. 9, vii. 26, viii. 29, and x. 27, a period of not more than twenty years; and in chap. vi. 25, a time within the life of a contemporary of Joshua, and so probably within his own life. In fact, in none of the fourteen

passages is there anything that would appear necessarily and absolutely to preclude its use by Joshua.

VI. The *authenticity* of the Book of Joshua is undeniable. Its claim to reception in the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures has not at any time been impugned on any valid principles of criticism. The ancient Hebrew Church received it as a portion of the divinely-inspired writings.¹

We may trace a confirmation of this authority and authenticity in the fact that events related in it are also recorded in almost identical language in other parts of Holy Scripture; *e.g.*, the conquest and partition of Canaan is referred to in Ps. lxxviii. 53-66, lxviii. 12-14, xlv. 2-4; the separation of the waters of Jordan in Ps. cxiv. 1-5 and Hab. iii. 8; the storm of hailstones after the destruction of the Canaanites of the south in Hab. iii. 11-13 as compared with Josh. x. 9-11; the battle in the valley of Gibeon in Isa. xxviii. 21; the setting up of the tabernacle in Shiloh in Josh. xviii. 1 compared with Judg. xviii. 31 and 1 Sam. i. 3, 9, 24, and iii. 21; and we may also briefly refer to other passages, as *e.g.* Acts vii. 45, where Stephen refers to the bringing in of the ark, and the expulsion of the nations by Joshua; Heb. iv. 8, where the *rest* which Joshua gave is referred to; Heb. xi. 30-32, which alludes to the fall of Jericho and the *faith* of Rahab; St. James ii. 25, who speaks also of Rahab as 'justified by her *works*, when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way.'

1. The *miracles* related in the book have led a certain

¹ It would seem from the statement of Josephus (*Antiq.* v. 1. 17) to have been deposited as such in the Hebrew temple, since he speaks of it as among τὰ ἀνακείμενα ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γύμναστα.

class of critics to suspect its credibility. Hence from this miraculous element Palfrey regards it as legendary, De Wette as mythical, and Hauff as a work designed solely to advocate the existence of a theocracy; whilst others have regarded the miraculous element 'as a halo of glory shed by the imagination of a later age round the ancient heroes and early origin of the nation.' Such views are held by Eichhorn, Bleek, Davidson, Ewald, and Lengerke. In regard, however, to the Book of Joshua, it has been pointed out by Canon Espin that the narrative of it must either be taken as it stands, or rejected *in toto*, and that it is, in fact, impossible to distinguish between some portions as historical and others as romantic. He shows that the two elements thus attempted to be set apart are indissolubly interwoven; and that if any credit is to be given to the writer, it must be given to his writings generally.

But, in regard to the objection grounded upon the miraculous element in the book, it is evident that such an objection would not affect the Book of Joshua alone, but would equally apply to almost every historical book of the Bible, and would, if valid, destroy the credibility of all the historical portions of revelation. But such an objection really begs the question altogether, and assumes that miracles are impossible. That assertion would have to be proved before the argument drawn from the presence of miracles vitiating the credibility of any work in which they are recorded can be pronounced valid. It is this underlying disbelief in miracles and prophecy that has induced, as we have seen, many critics to place the authorship of the book even later than the days of Ahab, since in that case the curse pronounced by Joshua upon him who should rebuild the walls of Jericho might be regarded as a '*vaticinium post eventum*,'

—a favourite charge of such writers. It has often, however, been convincingly shown that such a method of argument as that employed by the critics is in itself essentially uncritical; that it takes for granted what it ought to prove; that it endeavours to throw discredit upon an ancient writing, whose credentials have generally been admitted, by the introduction of objections which are, logically, foreign to the whole line of reasoning; and that it is founded upon an assumption (says Keil) that an account of the fulfilment of ancient promises cannot possibly lay any claim to historical truth, because promises fulfilled presuppose true prophecies, and, according to the first principles of rationalism, there are no such things; and that every description of supernatural occurrences is *eo ipso* legendary and mythological, because everything in the universe happens according to invariable natural laws, and it would be inconsistent for the omnipotent God to stretch forth His hand from the clouds and interfere in the affairs of men.

He, however, who believes in a revelation from God, confirmed and attested by miracles and prophecy, will trace in the miraculous events recorded in Joshua a gradual completion of the miracles wrought by Moses himself. He will see in the drying up of the waters of the Jordan a parallel to the drying up of the waters of the Red Sea; and in the fall of the walls of Jericho will trace a confirmation of the statement that the conquests of the Israelites over their enemies were to be effected 'not by their own sword,' but by 'God's right hand and His arm,' just as the Egyptians had been overthrown by the presence of God and the light of His countenance supporting and strengthening the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt to the land of Canaan.

The *miracle of the sun and moon standing still* at the command of Joshua (chap. x. 12-14) is, no doubt, a wonderful display of almighty power—a miracle without a parallel. Nor is it to be wondered at that it has either been toned down, or divested of its miraculous features, or even flatly denied by those who eliminate the supernatural from nature and revelation. And thus Le Clerc and others have endeavoured to prove that, so far from its being a miracle, it was a mere ‘optical delusion;’ whilst Rosenmüller would imagine that it was a mere miscalculation as to the hour of the day; and Winer, Davidson, and Ewald would refer the supposed miracle to a misconception of the poetic character of the Book of Jasher, from which it is quoted,—a view which has been advocated even by Keil, and Kurtz, and Hengstenberg, and some modern English commentators.

But grand as the miracle may be shown to be, especially by the light of modern science, yet the literal and the ordinary and the natural interpretation of the passage has been forcibly and powerfully vindicated by Bishop Watson (*Apology for the Bible*, letter iv.), as well as by Deyling (*Observ. Sacr.* i. § 19, p. 100). Nor can any believer in the Christian system refuse to admit that ‘such a miracle might be wrought in perfect conformity with the plans of Him who subordinates the firmest physical laws to the purposes of His moral administration, and who asserts that heaven and earth shall pass away, but that His word shall not pass away.’

Modern critics, indeed, have dwelt upon what they have ventured to call the absurd contradiction of the sun, itself a stationary body, being ordered to ‘stand still;’ of the utter disruption and confusion which such a sudden pause in the earth’s course around the sun would have caused to the whole universe; of the

strangeness, to say the least, of the moon being included in the command, since the staying of her course—unnecessary when the sun was ordered to stand still—might have proved the ruin of continents; and of the unaccountable silence of all profane contemporary history respecting a phenomenon so vast and so startling.

It is, however, certain that—as we have before remarked—the language of even the most distinguished philosophers, in the ordinary affairs of life, and when addressing the mass of mankind, is the *language of appearances*. They speak of things as they appear to the sight of ordinary men, from a practical, and not a scientific standpoint; and so, in common with the world at large, they do not hesitate to speak of the sun as moving or standing still, or as rising and setting each day. Nor is there any real contradiction in such a mode of speech.

Again, we may fairly say that the omnipotent God, the Creator of all things, could, by the very same power by which He caused the miracle itself, have prevented all the injurious consequences from occurring, which, without such special intervention, might have resulted from it. The great Author of Nature might so have regulated the course of nature as to have obviated the disasters which, under ordinary circumstances, might have followed such a particular miraculous interference with the usual processes of nature. But it may very fairly be questioned whether the miracle under consideration was not confined and local in its extent. Such an inference may be legitimately drawn, not only from the peculiar language of the order given, 'Sun, stand thou still' (in Heb., 'be thou silent,' or 'dumb') 'in Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon,' but also from

the object sought to be effected being local and restricted, viz. the causing the Canaanites to realize the sovereign power of God, and the manifestation of His protecting care of the Israelites, and of the weakness of the false gods whom the Canaanites worshipped, the sun and the moon being two of their deities. A special miracle, confined to that particular spot, would (it may fairly be argued) have had a greater influence over their minds and feelings than if the range of the miracle had extended over the whole world, or even the whole universe. Thus the Canaanites might be more reasonably brought to a sense of their weakness and sinfulness, and so be led to repentance, by such an interposition of divine power in their midst, and confined exclusively to them, than by a miracle whose effects and influence were world-wide. If the wonder-work were local, it would be needless to seek for notices of its occurrence in the different traditions of peoples and nations.

2. The same sort of criticism which, as we have seen, has employed itself in the former books of the Bible, has not passed over the Book of Joshua. Thus critics have imagined that they could trace in it—what they had asserted could be traced in the writings of the Pentateuch—the presence of two earlier documents from which it was derived,—the original or Elohist, and the supplementary or Jehovistic documents, separated one from another by the use of the different names for God, and by other characterizing marks of distinction. But though it may be conceded that original documents, compiled at the time when the events occurred and carefully preserved, may have existed in Joshua's day, and that there would be nothing opposed to a full belief in divine inspiration in his employment of them, yet there is no evidence in the simple, easy, and uniform

style in which the book is composed—in the manifest unity which is observable throughout it, a unity of idea and thought, of spirit and language, each part of it linked closely with that which precedes and follows—to favour the hypothesis which has already been alluded to, or of its being, as De Wette supposed, a mere compilation of various fragmentary elements, but rather everything against such an idea. Moreover, such a notion as that which has been proposed by Ewald, namely, that the book has grown up into its present shape under the forming hands of five different and successive writers, at different dates, reaching as far as the time of Manasseh, is a theory so wild and fanciful, and based upon such arbitrary assumptions, that it has not carried conviction even to the educated minds of his fellow-critics.

3. A further objection has been brought forward against the authenticity and authority of the Book of Joshua. A subjective criticism has searched diligently to discover whether anything could be found which seemed inconsistent either with the times in which the book was written, or with the circumstances of the case,¹ or the character of the age, or with anything that was stated in other parts of Scripture.

It has striven with a perverse and misapplied ingenuity to find such *discrepancies* as these, that hence some ground might be afforded for the theory of two distinct and separate elements in the book, the result of the employment of the Elohist and Jehovistic documents ;

¹ 'The very *anomalies*,' it has been said, 'of the writer's most valuable description of Palestine, inconvenient as they often are, seem thus to be attributable to the early date of his information. His documents were written whilst Israel was still a stranger in the land of his inheritance, and in parts of it still a foreign invader.'

but the discrepancies brought forward melt away before an impartial, fair, and liberal interpretation,—such fancied discrepancies—apparent rather than real, superficial rather than actual—as are imagined to exist between different statements in the book itself.¹

4. The *treatment of the Canaanites*, however, has been more eagerly seized upon than, perhaps, anything else in the Book of Joshua, as indicative of principles and practices supposed to be in antagonism with the divine character. The command given by Moses to extirpate the race, ‘Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them’ (Deut. xx. 16, 17),² has been made a ground of constant objection in all ages. ‘How ungodly,’ rashly exclaims the rationalist Eichhorn, ‘are the contents of the Book of Joshua! It not merely describes God as handing Canaan over to the Israelites in a manner opposed to all justice, since the Canaanites, as the first inhabitants, had the most perfect right to its possession, but also as planning a conquest of the most frightful description, and directly ordering the most appalling bloodshed, and the complete extermination of the Canaanites. Who can reconcile this with even imperfect conceptions of the Deity?’³

And in a similar spirit to this, though not often in so outspoken a way, objections have been made to this destruction of the Canaanites from the earliest times down to the present day,—in the very first ages of the

¹ Compare Josh. xi. 16 and xii. 7 with xviii. 3 and xvii. 1–16; or between the statements made in xii. 10–12 and in xv. 63 and xvi. 10; or, again, between xi. 23 and xviii. 1, xix. 51; and between xiii. 3 and xv. 45. See for explanation of these statements, Keil’s *Introduction*, pp. 9–16.

² Parallel to the destruction of the *Midianites* by Moses (Num. xxxi.) and to that of the *Amalekites* by Saul (1 Sam. xv.).

³ Quoted in Keil’s *Introduction*, p. 52.

Christian Church, by opponents not only of Christianity, but of Judaism ; afterwards by Marcion, Valentinus, and Basilides ; by Gnostics and Manichæans, who attempted to draw the inference from it that the God of the Old and the New Testament could not evidently be identical ; in another and a later age, by Tyndal, Chubb, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and other Deists, who unhesitatingly ventured to affirm that the ordering of such an extermination was opposed to the nature of a God of justice and love ; by members of the Rationalistic school in Germany, who have followed in the same line, and have declared that such a command, as being opposed to the principles of morality, could never have proceeded from God.

5. To objections such as these many and various *replies* have been and may be given.

(1.) It has been sometimes said by way of answer, as *e.g.* by Michaelis,¹ that in the conquest and subjugation of Canaan, the Israelites were simply getting back their own inheritance and that of their ancestors. But this vindication is inconsistent with the fact that the Hebrews always regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims in the land (Gen. xvii. 8, xxvi. 3), and that they were always in the habit of purchasing whatever land they required (Gen. xxxiii. 19, xxiii. 4).

(2.) Nor could any justification of the conduct of the Israelites be found in that plea which has been sometimes advanced, that since they were driven out of Egypt by force, they had a right to seize upon the territories of others, on the principle of self-preservation. But, in fact, such an expulsion never took place. They left Egypt because bidden by God to depart. And, moreover, such seizure of land would not have justified

¹ *Laws of Moses*, Book I. art. 3 (referred to by Canon Espin).

the slaughter of all the inhabitants of the country which they thought fit to appropriate.

(3.) Again, it has been supposed by some, from a mistaken interpretation of the language in Deut. xx. 10 et seq., that overtures of peace were first made to the Canaanites, in compliance with the command in the passage just quoted ; but for this explanation there is no authority. In fact, the command given did not apply to the nations that were near them and among whom they dwelt, but only to those which were 'very far off.'

Such apologies as these, then, are of no avail ; nor is there the slightest foundation for the assertion that the Canaanites were the first to begin the war ; nor, again, that, as being the children of Ham, they were unjust possessors of a territory to which they had no claim, and which belonged of right to the descendants of Shem.

What, then, would appear to be the true and just reply to the objection ? The only answer that can fairly be given is, that the Israelites took possession of the land as a free gift bestowed upon them by God, and that they exterminated the inhabitants because they were expressly ordered by God to do so. Such would seem to be the only reply to the objection that can legitimately be advanced. The land was God's gift¹ to them, and it was God's command that gave the sanction to their occupation of the land, and to the slaughter of its inhabitants. That no defence could be made for the Israelites on the ground of any imaginary human claim to the possession of the land, has been convincingly shown by Hengstenberg. The error, indeed, which lies at the root of the various objections which have been

¹ This is expressly stated in Joshua, and is in harmony with the rest of the Old Testament. In proof of this, see passages quoted by Keil in his *Introduction*, p. 53.

raised, is founded upon certain preconceptions which have been entertained respecting God and His divine government of the world,—preconceptions based upon *à priori* views, against which Bishop Butler, in his *Analogy*, has always entered an indignant protest.

God, on the contrary, as the almighty, living, personal Creator, the Governor and Preserver of the universe, who has determined for the inhabitants of the world the bounds of their habitations, and the appointed times when they should seek Him, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him (Deut. xxxii. 8 and Acts xvii. 26, 27), and who has given them their life, and property, and lands, that they should rightly use and enjoy them for their own benefit and for His glory, has the natural and inalienable power of taking away such gifts if abused, and of sweeping away the incorrigibly guilty from the earth. The Almighty Lord of all things had promised to give the land of Canaan as the possession of His chosen people, the descendants of Abraham, as soon as the iniquity of the Amorites, who then possessed it, was full (Gen. xii. 7, xv. 13-16.) Hence such expulsion of the Canaanites from possessions which were their own is to be regarded as a just punishment on the part of God of a people who had forfeited their right to their land by their incorrigible guilt and wickedness, while the bestowal of that land upon the Israelites was an act of undeserved and unmerited favour—a free gift. And again, the infliction of such punishments on the Canaanites by the Israelites was justifiable on their part, as having been executed by the express and definite command of God. It was this that gave the authoritative sanction to their proceedings. They were simply instruments in God's hands, and the executors of His righteous indignation against wickedness and sin. 'Thus,'

remarks Keil, 'the whole of the contents of our book may be traced to this central point in which their unity and truth are apparent, the striking manifestation of the justice, holiness, and mercy of God in one grand event in the history of the world. His *justice* is revealed in the case of the Canaanites,—His *mercy* in that of the Israelites, and the *holiness* of the omnipotent God is made manifest in both ; in the case of the Canaanites, on whom judgment fell, by their destruction ; in that of the Israelites, who were chosen to communion with the Lord, by the sanctification of their life, as seen in the faithful performance of the work assigned to them. Both contributed to the honour of God ; by both His name was glorified' (p. 56).

Such being the grounds upon which the expulsion of the Canaanites, the confiscation of their land, and the destruction of the inhabitants are justified,—grounds and reasons which are based upon the notion of God as the great Creator, Governor, and Director of everything in this world,—it remains for us to consider whether such treatment of the Canaanites is (as objectors allege) inconsistent with the moral attributes of the Deity, and likely to be prejudicial to those who were the executors of His just indignation.

We cannot doubt from the whole language of Scripture, that the iniquity of the Canaanites was of the most frightful and even revolting character. They had not only fallen away from all worship of God, but had sunk into idolatry of the most degrading, impure, savage, and unnatural kind, so that the land is said, in the strong language of Holy Writ, to have 'vomited out her inhabitants' (Lev. xviii. 25-30), while they themselves were justly liable to the storm of fire and brimstone which fell upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah,—a

judgment which might have acted, like the Deluge, as a warning to them. They had also been permitted to see what was good and holy in the lives of Abraham, and Melchisedek, and the rest of the patriarchs who dwelt in their midst. They might have read a lesson of warning—a lesson which Rahab and the Gibeonites would seem to have read—when they heard of the march of the Israelites, in the midst of signs and wonders, towards their land. But warnings were slighted, the judgments of the past forgotten, the measure of their iniquity filled up, and the time of their visitation past and over. Their iniquities and sins cried out to Heaven for vengeance, which could tarry no longer. Such hopeless, festering, contaminating sin merited the just punishment of the great Governor of the world; and instead of earthquake, or pestilence, or flood, or famine, which would equally have swept off in one universal destruction men, women, and children, the Lord of all—from whom the grant of life and property originally comes—thought fit, in His infinite wisdom, to choose the Israelites as the executioners of His sentence of righteous punishment on the sinful nation. When He thus delegated the office to them, they were freed from all charge of cruelty themselves, and were bound to obedience. They could not act otherwise than they did. Such an execution of a decree is no sanction for general cruelty, nor is it likely to have brutalized them or rendered them bloodthirsty, as some have pretended.¹ It has been truly remarked that a clear divine interposition plainly requiring a particular act of obedience

¹ God, moreover, definitely forbade all aggressive warfare on the part of the Israelites with their neighbours, and so no love of foreign conquest could have been engendered by His command to carry on a war of extermination against the Canaanites.

to an immediate divine command, so materially affects the principle upon which the action is performed, the motives from which it proceeds, and the effects it produces on the minds of those who are thus employed by the Deity, that it may altogether change the moral character of the action itself. And thus Bishop Butler¹ has wisely remarked, 'There are some particular precepts in Scripture given to particular persons requiring actions which would be immoral and vicious were it not for such precepts. But it is easy to see that all these are of such a kind as that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and the action, and both constitutes and shows that not to be unjust or immoral, which, prior to the precept, must have appeared and really have been so: which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality.'

Neither did Joshua himself, nor did the Israelites themselves, in hot blood, or from feelings of revenge, or infuriated by resistance, execute that sentence of extermination upon the Canaanites. They moved on—almost reluctantly, it would seem, at times²—as the executioners of the wrath of God; and thus district after district, and city after city, was destroyed in the exercise of that fearful punishment inflicted upon sin and guilt. The terrible reality of their awful commission must have been ever present to their minds; and they could not but observe what punishment would, in like manner, fall upon themselves, if they apostatized

¹ *Analogy*, Part II. chap. iii. Cf. Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*, Part II. chap. v. § 6; and Graves on the *Pentateuch*, Part III. Lect. I. See also Robinson's *Scripture Characters*, i. pp. 427, 428; also Archdeacon Hesse's Boyle Lectures, 1871, on the 'Moral Difficulties of the Bible,' Lect. VI.

² Cf. Num. xxxi. 13; Josh. xvi. 10, xviii. 3; Judg. i. 28, 35.

from that God of whose righteous vengeance against sin they had now such an awful evidence and proof. And thus also their great leader,—whose gentleness and mildness have already been spoken of,—regarding himself as the simple instrument in sweeping from the earth a long-tried, long-endured, but incurably abominable race, moved amidst these scenes of blood as an avenging angel might hover over them—the doer of the will of the Holy One, untainted by human passion, and full, even in his most unswerving zeal for God, of a terrible gentleness. So strengthened from on high, he passed through these scenes of blood which were appointed for him, as the sun's ray streams untainted through polluted elements, until his mighty work of conquest was accomplished.¹

Had that punishment not fallen upon the Canaanites, the Israelites would in all probability have been tempted to associate with them, and adopt their sinful courses, to many of which they had a secret inclination and propensity; true religion would have been in danger of perishing out of the world; the true conception of God would soon have utterly faded away out of their minds; and the whole long line of providences and miraculous interpositions by means of which God had chosen to bring His own people out of Egypt through the wilderness, and apart from all other nations as the repositories of His laws, faith, and worship, would all have been sacrificed and passed away out of remembrance, forgotten like a tale that is told.

It is vain and useless to say that God might have interfered at different times in the ordinary working of His providence, and so have kept His people free from the contamination of neighbouring sins, and have

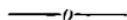
¹ Bishop Wilberforce, *Heroes of Hebrew History*, 'Joshua.'

checked and punished the Canaanites whenever the measure of their iniquity was becoming full. But such an infringement of general laws, and such an interference with the actions of men, have been shown by our great moral and Christian philosopher in his *Analogy* to be contrary to the usual mode in which God deals with nations and individuals.

And, once more, we should always remember, when judging of such a case as that which is now before us, that this world is not the limit of the scene of God's providences and punishments. There is a life beyond the grave where inequalities will be rectified, mercy shown to the repentant, and all the anomalies of this life amended. Such a fearful destruction became also a 'rehearsal of the dread events of the universal judgment to come,—a terrible example that a day is assuredly coming, when, after long forbearance, God will arise to execute His full and final vengeance on all unrepented sin.'

J U D G E S.

JUDGES.



'We must not look to the Book of Judges for a complete history of the period of the Judges, or one which throws light upon the development of the Israelites on every side. The character of the book, as shown in its contents and the arrangement of the materials, corresponds entirely to the character of the times over which it extends. The time of the Judges did not form a new stage in the development of the nation of God. It was not till the time of Samuel and David, when this period was ended, that a new stage began. It was rather a transition period, the time of free, unfettered development, in which the nation was to take root in the land presented to it by God as its inheritance.'

Biblical Commentary, by KEIL and DELITZSCH, iv. p. 239.

THE Book of Judges is closely connected with the Book of Joshua. Commencing with the same connective particle in Hebrew with which the previous book begins, it resumes the history of Joshua (chap. ii. 6-9) in almost identically the same language which had been before employed in the closing chapter of the preceding narrative (Josh. xxiv. 29, 30), allusion being made in the very opening of the book to Joshua's death (chap. i. 1, ii. 8, 9). Throughout, indeed, the Books of Joshua and Judges we meet with passages in each treating of the same subjects.¹ And, again, we may remark generally, that the history of the Judges assumes, as an

¹ Compare Judg. i. 10-15, 20, 21, 27, 29 with Josh. xv. 14-19, 63, xvii. 12, xvi. 10, and Josh. xix. 47 with Judg. xviii. (the capture of Laish).

acknowledged fact, the authority of the law of Moses amongst the Israelites, and recognises the existence and the reality of the Pentateuch. It is therefore needless to add, that some sort of notice of this book forms a fitting sequel to the consideration of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, and that to omit it would be to deprive of its full and organic completeness the subject-matter which has already occupied our attention.

I. A few introductory observations are necessary in order that we may form a clear and an intelligent idea of the subject-matter of this book. The term 'judge' has both a *general* and a *special* meaning.

1. From the very earliest times it is obvious that judges existed, in the *general* sense of the term, amongst the Israelites. Even during their servitude in Egypt it may be safely inferred from the question put to Moses, —'Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?' (Ex. ii. 14),—that the office of judge was recognised amongst the Hebrews, though, no doubt, the Egyptian magistrates were themselves in the habit of trying and deciding ordinary cases, either of personal violence, or robbery, or other criminal charges. It would also appear evident that, during the sojourning of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Moses was regarded as the chief judge and fountain-head of justice, though under him a system of judicature had been established, on the advice of Jethro (Ex. xviii. 14 seq.), with a final appeal in difficult cases to himself (Ex. xviii. 22–26), in order that he might, if necessary, lay the matter before God.

The system of judicature, in its first stages, would seem to have been based on the principle of *descent* or lineage, the patriarchal elders, or the princes of the tribes, or the heads of the chief families, being appointed

judges, inasmuch as their social position would give them weight, authority, and experience in their judicial decisions, and because they possessed the requisite time and leisure for the due administration of justice. But Moses provided that, after the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, when more civil cases would naturally arise, another principle, viz. that of *place*, rather than that of descent or lineage, should regulate the appointment of the judges (Deut. xvi. 18). It would seem probable that the judges spoken of as standing before Joshua in the assemblies of the people were the successors of those whom Moses had appointed in the wilderness (Josh. xxiv. 1).

In early times the high priest was regarded as the ultimate appeal in controverted cases (Deut. xvii. 12); but it is probable that, during the time of the judges, this peculiar office of the high priest had, for the most part, sunk into desuetude. In the days of Saul, who was overwhelmed with foreign wars, we read very little indeed respecting the administration of justice. It would appear certain, however, that David himself—aided probably by the high priest—personally, like Moses, administered justice, as its source and fountain, even in cases of life and death (cf. 2 Sam. i. 15, iv. 9–12), and also appointed deputies for the same purpose (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 2, 3).

We may infer from the statement in Deut. xvii. 8–13, that the Levites were entrusted with much judicial work; and we read in 1 Chron. xxiii. 4 that, in the days of David, 6000 of their number were set apart to be officers and judges. It is not improbable that they acted—in conjunction with the elders of each city, who were the local magistrates of the place, and sat in the gate administering justice (cf. Job xxix. 7 seq., and Ruth

iv. 1, 2)—as the teachers and expounders of the law, bringing their trained legal knowledge and judicial skill to bear upon the different cases brought before them. And we find, at a later period, Jehoshaphat giving the Levites, whom he had 'set,' with the chief fathers of Israel, for the 'judgment of the Lord and for controversies,' a solemn charge to administer justice 'in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart' (2 Chron. xix. 8-11).

In the peaceful reign of Solomon no doubt many cases, connected with property and other civil questions, as well as many criminal matters, were brought personally under the king's cognizance. His reputation as a dispenser of justice stood deservedly high. His prayer for an 'understanding heart to judge the people' was granted, for in one case we read that 'all Israel, when they heard of the judgment which the king had judged, feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him for judgment' (1 Kings iii. 9, 28). He, too, like David, summarily executed sentences of death (1 Kings ii. 34, 46).

No doubt the local magistrates in the days of the kings lost the principal part of the power and influence which they originally possessed as administrators of justice, and their functions, under the monarchy, were, generally speaking, performed by the Levitical body.

During the later period of the monarchy the 'princes'—who were, perhaps, the heads of the houses and the elders of the land—had a considerable share in the administration of justice; and, if we may form an opinion from the severity of the denunciations contained in Isaiah (chap. v. 7, x. 2, lvi. 1, et passim) and in other prophetic writers (Jer. v. 1, vii. 5; Amos v. 15; Hab. i. 4, etc.) against the corruption and venality of judges,

we may infer that at that time there existed a strong tendency to the maladministration of law and justice. Both the office and the person of the judge were alike held in veneration and respect among the Jews (cf. Job xxix. 7-10), who were, as a people, remarkably sensitive as to the strict and impartial administration of justice by their judges. Under the theocracy, to seek a legal decision was to 'inquire of God,' as the author of all law (Ex. xviii. 15), and the 'sentence' given was said to be 'God's judgment,' and its source was accordingly regarded as divine. The title 'Gods' is sometimes applied to the judges (Ex. xxii. 28, and cf. Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6). Those who were to be appointed to the office of judge were to be 'able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness,' men who would not 'wrest judgment,' nor 'respect persons,' nor 'take a gift' (Ex. xviii. 21, and Deut. xvi. 18, 19; cf. Ps. lxxxii.). The persons also of the judges, like those of the tribunes of the people among the Romans, were regarded as sacred and inviolable—'Sacrosancti.'

2. But apart from this general sense in which the term 'judge' is employed, there is also a *special* signification of the word as applied to those rulers or magistrates who governed the Israelites in the time that intervened between the age of Joshua and that of the kings. The word 'judges'¹ is simply in the Hebrew the participle of the verb that signifies to 'judge,' which verb has sometimes attached to it the meaning of to 'avenge,' and to 'punish' (= κατακρίνω).²

We find amongst the Carthaginians, officers who were

¹ שׁוֹפְטִים, from שָׁפַט, to 'judge;' LXX. κριταί; Vulg. 'liber judicium.'

² Cf. 2 Sam. xviii. 19, where the word is translated in the English Version, 'avenged;' in the marginal reading, 'judged him from the hand.'

called 'suffetes,' or 'sufetes,' which, though in a Latin dress, is clearly identical with the Hebrew 'shofetim.' These officers among the Phœnicians are spoken of by Livy (xxxiii. 48) under the title of 'judices,' and regarded by him as occupying a similar position to that which was occupied by the consuls at Rome (xxx. 7).¹ Moreover, Josephus (*Contra Apion*, i. 21) refers to certain officers at Tyre, under the name of judges or dicasts,² at a time when there were no kings there. The title, 'the suffete,' occurs in Phœnician inscriptions.

The name, indeed, of judge is not definitely given to each one severally who is classified in the list of judges in the book that bears their name; but it is assigned to them as their peculiar title by Nathan in 2 Sam. vii. 11, and so in the Book of Judges (ii. 16) it is said generally that 'the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them;' and St. Paul, when preaching at Antioch (Acts xiii. 20), says, 'after that He gave unto them judges,'³ about the space of 450 years, until Samuel the prophet.'

They would appear also to have been called 'saviours' or 'deliverers,'—a name bestowed on them in the Book of Judges (iii. 9, 15), where Othniel and Ehud are expressly spoken of as 'deliverers,' or, in the Hebrew, 'saviours.' And we not only meet with the statement respecting the class generally, 'The Lord raised up judges which *delivered* (marg. reading, *saved*) them out of the hand of them that spoiled them' (ii. 16); but also specifically, Shamgar, Gideon, Tola, and Samson (iii. 31, vi. 15, vii. 7, x. 1, xiii. 5) are spoken of as having *saved* or

¹ In Livy xxvii. 37 we find 'Suffetes,—qui summus Pœnis est magistratus.'

² Δικασταί, cf. *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, i. p. 989, and Keil's *Commentary*, p. 241.

³ In Greek text, ἔδωκε κριτάς.

delivered Israel from their different enemies; and so, moreover, in the dark times before Jephthah, God refused to save or deliver them any more, but left them to be delivered by the false gods whom they had chosen to follow (x. 12, 13).¹

We cannot doubt that the judges or '*saviours*' were, in this feature at least of their character, *types* of the still greater Saviour and Deliverer of the whole human race, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is impossible to view their history aright, or to assign to it its proper value, if we do not trace in it prophetic intimations and foreshadowings of the future Saviour of His people. Thus regarded, events and circumstances stand out in their full and rightful significance. Without such a reference we dwarf and confine the teaching of this portion of Holy Scripture.

There can be no doubt that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had before his mind the actions of the judges, when he exclaims: 'And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, and of Samuel, who through faith subdued kingdoms (as, *e.g.*, Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah), wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions (as Samson), escaped the edge of the sword (as Gideon and Samson), out of weakness were made strong (as Deborah and Barak), waxed valiant in the fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens (as Samson).'

If, indeed, we view the history before us as a mere profane and secular story, as many modern critics, and commentators, and historians are pleased to do, and divest it of all spiritual meaning, and figurative and

¹ The verb in the Hebrew is the same throughout in its different forms, יָשַׁע, to 'save.'

typical reference, which, by the more ancient school of interpreters, it has always been supposed to possess, we denude the Book of Judges of very much of the value and importance it would otherwise have as an ensample to the Church of Christ even in the present day, and darken those rays of prophetic light which now stream from the sacred narrative. Thus, without being in any degree servilely bound by the fanciful theories of some advocates of typology, we may legitimately trace in the actions of Gideon, and Barak, and Jephthah, and Samson, figures and representations of things to come,—prophetic intimations of the conduct of their great Antitype.

It has also been remarked, that not only were the judges in many cases types of Christ in what they did that was well done, but also *contrasts* to Him in what they did that was wrong; so that His example often supplies the '*antithesis* and *antidote* to their sins,' and that consequently 'wherever the types err, the Antitype rises up in a noble and sublime contrast.'

The mode of the appointment of the judges is described in slightly different language; though—whether it is said, 'the Lord raised up judges' (ii. 16), or whether it is simply stated that 'there arose Tola, and after him Jair' (x. 1, 3), or whether the 'Spirit of the Lord' is said to have 'come upon' any one (iii. 10, vi. 34, xi. 29), or whether they were called to their office by the instrumentality of others, as Barak by the 'call' of Deborah the prophetess and judge (iv. 4-6), or whether elected by the 'people and princes,' as Jephthah (x. 18, xi. 5, 6)—they all were nevertheless, from the very nature of the theocracy under which they lived, to be regarded as appointed by the sanction and authority of God to the office of judge.

It is difficult to state with any degree of precision and certainty whether the judges were *ordinary* or *extraordinary* rulers,—whether they had a regular and permanent function as rulers of the people, holding their office for life, as *e.g.* in the case of Eli and Samuel (1 Sam. iv. 18, vii. 15), or whether (as would seem to have been the case with the earlier judges) they were merely appointed—like the dictators at Rome—on sudden emergencies to deliver the people from particular enemies, and abdicated their high office when the work was done for which they were elected.

Some writers have compared the period of the judges to that of the heroic age in Greece. There is, indeed, a general and superficial similarity between the two periods, which strikes the imagination when it is first presented to it, but which will scarcely stand the test of a closer and more accurate investigation. The judges, or at least some of them, did, no doubt, like the heroes of the Grecian story, rise up suddenly and deliver their country from oppression and from their enemies. Their actions were in some cases, as in that of Samson, bold, startling, and indicative of great personal strength and prowess; but, apart from this superficial analogy, there are few features of resemblance traceable, either in the condition of the country before and after the judges, in the nature of the government, or in the intellectual, moral, and social state of the respective countries, which would show any close resemblance between the heroic age in Greece and the government of the judges among the Hebrews. A closer parallel would be found to the heroic age of Greece in the chivalrous barons of the Middle Ages.

In many respects the time of the judges was a dark and gloomy period of Jewish history. The priesthood

had apparently lost, to a great extent, its power of guiding and influencing the people aright, and, as a consequence, schisms and idolatrous practices prevailed; and as a final result the people began to forsake God, and, in the licence of unrestrained liberty, 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes.' For it is an erroneous notion which is entertained by some persons, that the sins of the individual have no effect upon the life of the nation or the state of the Church,—that each man is, so to speak, his own keeper, and is not accountable or responsible to any one for his private opinions or particular theories. The fallacy of such views is remarkably shown in the history of this book, especially at its close. We can there trace in the idolatrous tendencies and practices of Micah, as an individual, the evil leaven spreading through the social system, the seed of idolatry germinating and fructifying with a miserable and fatal fruitfulness throughout the people at large; and, in the immoral conduct of a single Levite, a festering source of corruption to the body politic. How different the bright lustre of domestic purity, as it shone forth in the conduct and family history of Ruth the Moabitess!

II. The *place* which the Book of Judges occupies in Old Testament history, and the *object* for which it was written, demand some consideration. The Book of Judges may fairly be regarded as filling in the Old Testament a similar position to that filled by the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament. The Book of Judges follows next in order to the Book of Joshua, the type of Jesus. And so the Gospels, which narrate the life of Jesus, are closely succeeded by the Book of the Acts, in which is described the working of the Holy

Spirit in the apostles, who were appointed, like the judges, to judge spiritually the twelve tribes of Israel. Speaking generally, the history of the judges may perhaps be regarded as a foreshadowing of the history of the apostles in the Church of Christ. As in the Book of Judges we see an exhibition of the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit in some of those who were raised up to deliver the Israelites,—all that they did well being attributable to the presence of that Holy Spirit in them; so, too, in the Acts that same work of the Holy Spirit may be traced in the different apostles, who were chosen to conquer the enemies of the faith, and to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel of Christ throughout the world. There is another point of connection and resemblance—negative rather than positive—between the Book of Judges and the Acts, in the fact that much is *left unsaid* in each alike. As in the Book of the Judges only the actions of a very few of the judges are at all fully described, and a large number are passed by with the very briefest allusion, as *e.g.* Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon; so, too, in the Acts, the biographies of St. Peter and St. Paul occupy almost the entire notice, while the rest of the apostles sink into the shadow of obscurity. There is (as Bishop Wordsworth has well remarked) an inspiration in this silence. After all, even the highest and most distinguished amongst men are to be regarded simply as instruments in the hands of God, and their reputation is made entirely subservient to His glory. Thus are our eyes taken away from man and his works (however distinguished they may be), and centred upon the Divine Author and source of all that is great and good.

Moreover, there is an analogy to be traced between the Book of Judges and the Book of the Revelation of

St. John. Just as the Book of Judges brings before us the moral and spiritual decline that took place soon after the death of Joshua, and shows us how the natural heart of man struggled against the precepts of the Divine Will,—how transgression was punished by the hand of external enemies, and how, upon repentance, the Divine anger was often appeased, and how self-will and abuse of the gifts of the Spirit, gifts displayed even in the most corrupt times, find their just punishment ; so also we can trace in the Book of the Revelation of St. John the gradual falling away of different particular churches from the faith, the ruin or gradual extinction of those churches, the prostitution of spiritual gifts to low and base purposes, the prevalence of idolatry in the heart of man, the final diffusion of the spirit of Antichrist in the Church, followed, however, in the end by the triumph of Jesus Christ over all His foes.

It is obvious, therefore, that though we may find *encouragement* in the Book of Judges from the contemplation of the mercy of God in delivering His people from their enemies, in shedding abroad His miraculous gifts amongst them, in raising them from their low estate, and in pointing out to them the liberty of the service of God ; yet we cannot close our eyes against the solemn *warnings* which it contains against all abuse of the good gifts of God, an abuse resulting from our wilfulness, selfishness, and idolatry. Hence the Book of Judges has been happily said to be ‘a record of God’s power and man’s weakness ; of God’s love and man’s unthankfulness.’ Nor is it less a record of God’s faithfulness and truth ; and so it becomes profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

The title, ‘Judges,’ has been well chosen as descriptive

of the nature and the contents of the book, though it is not quite commensurate with the history of all the judges who ruled over the Israelites. For as, on the one hand, Moses and Joshua were in a certain sense judges, so Eli, and Samuel, and his two sons were classed under the same head (1 Sam. iv. 18, vii. 15-17, viii. 1). But still, in the Book of Judges, we meet with all those to whom the title pre-eminently and specially belonged, from Othniel to Samson, who were extraordinary rather than ordinary magistrates, exercising a power and holding an office which were clearly distinguishable from the more uniform and priestly judicature of Eli, and from the more prophetic character of the government of Samuel.

The Book of Judges is also, to a certain extent, related to the Book of Samuel, that follows it. Thus the conduct of Saul in reference to the Kenites (1 Sam. xv. 6), and that of David as recorded in 1 Sam. xxx. 29, have been regarded as explained by the statement in Judg. i. 16; and so the reference to Abimelech, in 2 Sam. xi. 21, is interpreted by the language used in Judg. ix.

Whether, therefore, this book forms merely a 'link in an historical series,' or whether it possesses a more definite connection with the books that precede and follow it, it presents us with a picture of the state of society, and the condition of the religious life of the nation and of individuals, which sheds much light upon Jewish history, and would have been greatly missed had it never been handed down. We may not, very naturally, have a perfect history of the times recorded. There may be omissions, partial descriptions, a degree of obscurity hanging over portions of the narrative. The accounts may be circumscribed; the judges may have been only heads of

their particular tribes, and of limited districts (as in the case of Gideon and Jephthah). They may have at times fallen into sin, and widely departed from the ideal which we might desire to form of them. The very number of the judges may be doubtful, and some writers may be inclined to regard Bedan (1 Sam. xii. 11) and Jael (Judg. v. 6) as two judges whose history has been passed over in silence. We may concede all this, and yet, notwithstanding, there may legitimately be supposed to be a unity of design and treatment traceable in the work as a whole, that design being to show that Israel was God's people in spite of all their rebellion and idolatry—that He was willing in mercy to receive them back to Himself on their repentance—willing to raise up deliverers who should rescue them from the oppression and violence under which they groaned—and anxious to mould their individual character and regulate their national life, to free them from slavery and restore them to liberty, in proportion to their sorrow for their sin and their efforts at reformation. Of all this we see glimpses in the Book of Judges. The progress, indeed, of the nation to a better life may have been slow and intermittent. The times of declension and relapse may have been frequent. The law of Moses may oftentimes have almost been in abeyance, constantly infringed and neglected. The nation of the Canaanites may have been still in the land, left as a means of chastising the iniquities and idolatries of the Israelites. But, nevertheless, the book before us—short as it is for the long period of which it is the record, so much shorter in proportion than the Books of Joshua or Samuel—fragmentary as it is in its historical details, though, as we may judge from the minuteness of the accounts given of some of the events in the lives of Barak and

Gideon, and Jephthah and Samson, abundance of material for writing the book must have been at hand—stands clearly out as an inspired record of the theocracy, as a map in which may be traced the great purposes of God, and manifests the undoubted presence of God in the regulation and management of the affairs of His chosen people, drawing away our thoughts not unfrequently from what is simply historical or political to what is moral and spiritual. We can trace in this book a graphic picture of a nation in an unsettled and ever-changing condition, with a state of anarchy prevailing and the absence of all regular law and police, when the ‘highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways’ (v. 6), when ‘every one (as we have before said) did that which was right in his own eyes’ (xvii. 6). We mark the prevalence of impiety, lawlessness, superstition, idolatry, and disobedience, which called forth the righteous judgment of an offended God ; and then, again, signs of repentance and contrition, which are met on God’s part by long-suffering mercy, pardon, and deliverance. With such marks and evidences before them of the justice and the mercy of Jehovah, none could dare to trespass upon His loving-kindness, none could fairly sink into despondency and despair.

This work, therefore, is a record of the religious history of the nation,—of a moral progress slow and imperfect,—of constant alternations and vicissitudes in the spiritual character of the people,—of the manifestation of God’s anger and of the people’s sorrow, repentance, and amendment,—of the mode in which God saw fit to discipline them by keeping enemies ever at hand to chastise them to obedience, and to bring their sins and iniquities before their minds and thoughts (see ii. 11 seq.),

and then, on their contrition and repentance, raising up judges who rescued them from their depressed condition. The moral and spiritual education of Israel is the grand idea presented to us in this book. In the midst of their sins, their sorrows, their backslidings, and their punishments, it may at times be difficult to trace this process of moral training, but we believe that it was present to the mind of the writer from first to last. Hence, again (as we have seen in former books), the history is subordinated to the special intention and purpose of God, and consequently in some cases very brief notices are given of events which might in our judgment, as mere matters of history, have claimed a much longer and fuller consideration, while the minute and diffusive fulness of other portions, as *e.g.* in the accounts of Deborah and Barak, of Gideon and Abimelech, of Jephthah and of Samson, makes it clear that the writer was at no loss for the fullest materials for his work, but that he saw fit to subordinate his narrative to the particular object which he had before him, which was (as has been said) moral and spiritual, rather than political or simply historical.

III. No one can read this book attentively and not perceive that there is a definite and systematic *unity* of design and structure traceable in it,—an historical sequence of sin, chastisement, repentance, and deliverance following close upon each other, in an ever-recurring order, through many generations. We can trace these gradual stages in the nation's history from the time of the generation which had not forgotten all the great things that Joshua had said and done, to the dark times in which Samson lived, when the national life seemed to flicker—like an expiring lamp—in the last

stage of its existence. The very fact that certain events which exhibit in dark and gloomy colours the religious and national degeneracy of the people, — the workings of sin eating like a canker into the life of the nation,— important as they are in themselves, and full of sad and melancholy instruction, are, though chronologically to be assigned to a much earlier time, relegated to the end of the book, and placed, as it were, in an appendix, in order probably that the sequence and symmetry of the history should not be disturbed by their insertion in the main body of the narrative, is a proof of this unity of design on the part of the writer. With such a sequence of cause and effect running throughout this book, and with such a pervading principle of unity in its composition from first to last, we are naturally disposed to complain of critical writers¹ who have endeavoured to disintegrate the narrative, and, on very insufficient grounds, to break it up into various inorganic fragments, destitute of cohesion and union, in opposition to the consentient voice of the Hebrew and the Christian Church. We can see why the events given in the Appendix—to which some critics have objected—are so placed in order to prevent the unity of the narrative being injured by the insertion of events which, though they indicate the natural effects resulting from indulged sin and licence, do not follow in direct rule and order of sequence from particular circumstances mentioned in the history. Arguments, derived from a supposed difference of style in different portions of the book,² have been answered by the very divergence of

¹ *E.g.* De Wette, Studer, Bertheau, Stähelin, and others.

² Keil has remarked, *Introd. to Judges*, p. 247, ‘No such differences can be pointed out in language or style as would overthrow the unity of authorship, or even render it questionable;’ and again (p. 264), ‘The

the theories, one from another, of those who have raised objections to its unity on such shifting and variable data.

IV. As regards the *author* of the book, and the exact *time* of its composition, the same difficulties meet us which have already met us in previous books, and which are also found in subsequent historical books of the Bible.

A *negative* argument against a *late* date for its composition is furnished by the remark (i. 21) that the Jebusites continued in possession of Jerusalem 'even unto this day,' which would seem to prove that the Book of Judges must have been written before the conclusion of the eighth year of the reign of David at Hebron, about which time we read that he captured Jerusalem (see 2 Sam. v. 6-9 and 1 Chron. xi. 4-9). It is perhaps impossible to draw any positive conclusion from the expression which occurs several times in the appendices, viz., 'In those days there was no king in Israel' (chaps. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xxi. 25), inasmuch as some have inferred from it that 'it was composed at a period in which the Hebrew monarchy was not settled,' while others have deduced the inference that 'the kingly form of government had long been established in the compiler's time.'

The testimony of the Jews is in favour of *Samuel* as the author of the book, a view which has been adopted by many writers in different ages, as, for example, by Jahn, Bishop Patrick, Keil (p. 248), and Dr. Pusey on *Daniel* (p. 311). And there is much in favour

arguments adduced against the unity of authorship in all three parts, the introduction, the body of the work, and the appendix, will not bear examination.'

of this supposition, if, as would seem most probable, an early date is assigned to the writer of the book. In advocacy of this view we may observe that *Zidon* is mentioned, but not Tyre, in Judges; and Asher is censured for not expelling the Zidonians (i. 31),—circumstances which seem to point to an early date for the work, since in after-times Tyre and Zidon became the allies both of David and Solomon. Hence it may be inferred that the book—especially from the statements in xvii. 6 and xxi. 25—may have been written in the days of Saul, or not later than the early days of David's reign. If this inference may be fairly deduced from the facts of the case, there would be nothing to militate against the supposition of Samuel being its author.

Stähelin and Ewald, and other critical writers,—basing their views chiefly on the text, xviii. 30, 31, in which the phrase, 'until the day of the captivity of the land,' occurs, and which they interpret (erroneously, as it would seem) of the Babylonian or Assyrian captivities, or at any rate some earlier captivities recorded in 1 Kings xv. 20, 2 Kings xv. 29,—assign a date almost as late as the captivity in Babylon to some portions at least of the work. But it would seem far more natural to limit the idea of the 'captivity of the land' to the particular period to which the context refers, viz. to 'the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.' It may be fairly affirmed that the book does not, either in its matter or in its language, contain traces of a later date. The language in which it is written is *pure* Hebrew, untainted by the Chaldee phraseology which may be traced in the latter parts of the Old Testament. Some phrases are met with only in Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

The writer's unflinching courage and veracity are

shown in the uncompromising manner in which the sins of the people are denounced—their sufferings traced up to those sins—their long periods of servitude all ascribed to their violation of the laws of God, to their falling into the sin of idolatry, and to their ungrateful and rebellious spirit.

It would seem not improbable that the writer made use of traditions and of documents in the composition of his work. The vividness of the expressions employed—the minute fidelity of the descriptions—the peculiarity of some of the phrases recorded—the exactness of the chronological statements—all bear witness to the fact that the writer, in a history extending over 350 years, either obtained his information from trustworthy eye-witnesses of the facts related, or from carefully preserved records. That the writer should thus have employed either documentary records or living testimony, does not (as has been already observed on more than one occasion) derogate in the least degree from the inspiration of the work. He might have employed all existing materials under the guiding and directing hand of the God of inspiration. Such an acknowledgment does not oblige us to yield to the theories of those critics, who laboriously endeavour to trace out a confused blending of materials, a fragmentary and disjointed character, and an absence of all organic unity in the work.

We have already seen that the Book of Judges is quoted and referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and references to it are, moreover, found in other parts of Holy Scripture, — historical, prophetic, and devotional.¹ Moreover, we can trace in the book itself

¹ Cf. 1 Sam. xii. 9-11; 2 Sam. xi. 21; Ps. lxxviii. 56-66, lxxxiii. 9-11, cvii. 34-46; Isa. ix. 4, x. 26; Neh. ix. 27; Acts xiii. 20.

passages which refer to each of the books of the Pentateuch as well as to Joshua.

It is thought by some writers (as *e.g.* Horne, iv. p. 42) that it possesses external evidence for its authenticity in the traditions preserved in heathen authors, as, for example, in Sanchoniathon, a Tyrian writer, said to have lived soon after Gideon, to whose antiquity the great enemy of Christianity, Porphyry, bears witness, affirming that Sanchoniathon¹ derived many of the details of his work from the Memoirs of Jerumbalus² or Jerubaal, another name for Gideon. It has also been supposed that the 'Vulpinaria,' or feast of the Foxes, celebrated by the Romans in April, was derived from the story of Samson, which was brought into Italy by the Phœnicians; and, moreover, that in the narrative of Samson and Delilah we trace the original of the story of Nisus and his daughter, who cut off the fatal lock of hair on which victory depended; while in Samson himself some have traced the original Hercules of the pagan mythology.³

V. The question regarding the *Chronology* of this book is a very difficult one. There are but few fixed dates to guide us in our inquiry. We must, it would seem, be content with an *approximation* to the correct chronology. The few fixed data to guide us are the following:⁴—We find that in 1 Kings vi. 1, the temple of Solomon began to be built in the 480th year after the exodus, and in the fourth year of his reign; again we

¹ On the doubts, however, respecting Sanchoniathon, see Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Biography*.

² Ἐκ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων Ἱερυμβάλου.

³ See Horne's *Introd.* iv. pp. 42, 43, and Müller's *Dorians*, ii. chap. 12.

⁴ Cf. Dr. Smith's *Bible Dict.* art. 'Chronology,' Third Period, p. 323.

find, in Acts xiii. 17–21, a statement by St. Paul, that God ‘gave unto them judges, about the space of 450 years, until Samuel the prophet;’ and lastly, we may infer from the times mentioned in the book itself, that 390 years elapsed from the beginning of the first servitude until Samson’s death.

These are the three great chronological data upon which we have to proceed, and it is most difficult, if not impossible, to adjust them in any way so that they may harmonize together.

Thus Ewald (in his *History of Israel*, p. 140 seq.), regarding 480 years as a fixed time between the exodus and the laying of the foundation of the temple in Solomon’s reign, endeavours to show that these 480 years might be divisible into 12 equal parts of 40 years each,—considering 40, which so often occurs in the Judges, as a fundamental number,—assuming 12 judges and 40 years as a generation, and thinking that to every 40 years a great hero was assigned. But it is obvious that such a calculation rests only upon a hypothetical conjecture.

The *Jews* also take the 480 years as the basis of their chronological scheme; but in attempting to make the different periods of time referred to in the Book of Judges harmonize with this fixed date, they are compelled either arbitrarily to alter the times of the different servitudes, or to strain some of their theories to a tension which they will not fairly bear.¹

In the marginal comments in the English Version another scheme is proposed, by which the judges are not regarded in all cases as following each other in a regular succession, but, in certain instances, as ruling

¹ For the schemes of Clement of Alexandria and Josephus, see *Imp. Dict. of the Bible*, p. 999.

simultaneously over different parts of the country. Thus it has been supposed that while Samson was judge in the west, Jephthah was exercising power at the same time in the east. Here, again, a wide field is thrown open for critical ingenuity and the exercise of the imagination, and the results cannot fail, in not a few cases, to be purely arbitrary conjectures. To one phase of this scheme Keil gives in his adhesion, and so also Hengstenberg, following to some extent the views formerly advocated by Vitranga. But we can only say that the evidence adduced is conjectural, and might be applied in other directions besides those to which they have applied it; and, moreover, such a scheme is perhaps liable to the charge of seeming to disintegrate the Jewish polity,—different rulers exerting sway in different parts of the country at one and the same time. Still some have thought that, as in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom during the heptarchy, two or three tribes not unfrequently united together under some enterprising leader in resistance to a common foe, so it might have been in the rule of the judges. This theory, however, when minutely examined, and when efforts are made to synchronize the events in conformity with it, will be found liable to various objections, crowding at times many events into a minute space of time, and confusing periods of anarchy with those of servitude.

By some writers, recourse is had to a *different reading* in *Acts* (xiii. 19, 20), which has been thus expressed:—‘When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot, in about 450 years; and after that He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.’ But this reading, though stated to have the support of four of the oldest MSS. and the Vulgate, and to be adopted by Lachmann, is regarded by

some of the soundest Biblical scholars to have its origin in alterations of the scribes, with the very object of meeting this acknowledged chronological difficulty.

In consequence of these divergent views and these perplexing computations, some critics have concluded that there must be some corruption of reading in the statement in the Book of Kings. But, with the older critics, it is impossible not to be suspicious of all attempts at tampering with the text of Holy Scripture.

We may refer for this chronological difficulty to Keil's *Judges*, p. 276 et seq., who gives his own scheme at p. 289, of which scheme, though with certain exceptions, Lord A. Hervey gives his approval, in the *Speaker's Commentary*, and finds it a place in his *Introduction to the Book of Judges*. With Keil's scheme Hengstenberg, as we have already said, in his *Genuineness of the Pentateuch*, vol. ii. p. 19 seq., agrees, remarking that 'great light is thrown on the character of the Book of Judges by the correct determination of the chronology of this period, as Keil has laid it down, after earlier labourers, among whom Vitringa is the most distinguished.'

Bishop Wordsworth—who says that the 'chronology of the book cannot be exactly settled'—has given a scheme, in which the 'calculations are set down only as probable,' and 'some of the dates are only approximations,' referring to *Cornelius à Lapide* on Judges iii. 14.

The question is fully discussed, and the various opinions investigated, in the *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, pp. 996-999; but it can scarcely be said that any definite or decided solution of the difficulty is proposed.

Dr. S. Davidson, in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 480, says that the 'chronology of the book is surrounded with difficulties,' arising from

different causes, in which place he refers to Bertheau's opinion, and to Bunsen's theory on the subject. He also considers that 'Keil's investigations, ingenious and elaborate though they be, have contributed nothing towards a satisfactory settlement of the question,' and adds, that 'it is better to abandon the attempt than make assumptions in place of absent data.'

In an article in Dr. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, pp. 1172, 1173, it is said that 'on the whole it seems safer to give up the attempt to ascertain the chronology exactly,' though the writer speaks of Keil's scheme as 'one of those least open to objection,' adding that 'Keil reckons the dates successively as far as Jair, but makes Jephthah and the three following judges contemporary with the 40 years of the Philistine oppression (cf. x. 6-xiii. 1); and by compressing the period between the division of the land and Chushan-rishathaim into 10 years, and the Philistine wars to the death of Saul into 39, he arrives ultimately at the 480 years.'

A. Keil's Scheme of Chronology, p. 289.

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS FROM THE EXODUS TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

| The Principal Events. | Duration. | Years before the Birth of Christ. |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Exodus of Israel from Egypt, | — | 1492 |
| The Law given at Sinai, | — | 1492-1491 |
| Death of Aaron and Moses in the fortieth year of the wandering in the desert, | 40 | 1453 |
| Conquest of Canaan by Joshua, | 7 | 1452-1445 |
| From the division of the land to the invasion of Chushan-rishathaim, | 10 | 1445-1435 |
| Death of Joshua, | — | c. 1442 |
| Wars of the tribes of Israel with the Canaanites, | — | 1442 onwards |
| Carry forward, | 57 | years. |

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY—*continued.*

| The Principal Events. | Dura- tion. | Years before the Birth of Christ. |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Brought forward, . . . | 57 | years |
| War of the congregation with Benjamin, . . . | — | c. 1436 |
| Oppression by Chushan-rishathaim, . . . | 8 | 1435-1427 |
| Deliverance by Othniel, and rest, . . . | 40 | 1427-1387 |
| Oppression by the Moabites, . . . | 18 | 1387-1369 |
| Deliverance by Ehud, and rest, . . . | 80 | 1369-1289 |
| Victory of Shamgar over the Philistines, . . . | — | — |
| Oppression by Jabin, . . . | 20 | 1289-1269 |
| Deliverance by Deborah and Barak, and rest, . . . | 40 | 1269-1229 |
| Oppression by the Midianites, . . . | 7 | 1229-1222 |
| Deliverance by Gideon, and rest, . . . | 40 | 1222-1182 |
| Rule of Abimelech, . . . | 3 | 1182-1179 |
| Tola, judge, . . . | 23 | 1179-1156 |
| Jair, judge, . . . | 22 | 1156-1134 |
| Eli, high priest and judge, 40 years, . . . | — | 1154-1114 |
| After repeated Apostasy, Oppression— | | |
| (a) In the East. | (b) In the West. | |
| By the Ammonites, 18 years, from 1134 to 1116 B.C., | By the Philistines, Loss of the ark, . . . | 40 — |
| Jephthah, judge 6 years, from 1116 to 1110 B.C., | Samson's deeds, . . . | — |
| | Samuel's prophetic labours, | — |
| Ibzan, judge 7 years, from 1110 to 1103 B.C., | Defeat of the Philis- tines, | — |
| Elon, judge 10 years, from 1103 to 1093 B.C., | Samuel, judge, . . . | 19 |
| | Saul, king, . . . | 20 |
| Abdon, judge 8 years, from 1093 to 1085 B.C., | David, king at Hebron, | 7 |
| | David, king at Jerusalem, | 33 |
| | Solomon's reign to the building of the temple, | 3 |
| Total, . . . | | 480 |

1114 onwards

1094

1094-1075

1075-1055

1055-1048

1048-1015

1015-1012

years.

B. *Bishop Wordsworth's Scheme of Chronology.*

'The following calculations are set down only as probable.'

The events of the period may be represented as follows :—

| | Years. |
|--|---|
| Wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, | 40 |
| Victories of Joshua, | 17 |
| Chushan-rishathaim oppresses Israel, | 8 |
| Othniel, judge, and rest, | 40 |
| Moabitish oppression, | 18 |
| Ehud, and rest, | 80 |
| Shamgar and Jabin, | 20 |
| Deborah, and rest, | 40 |
| Midianitish oppression, | 7 |
| Gideon, and rest, | 40 |
| Abimelech, | 3 |
| Tola, | 23 |
| Jair, | 22 |
| Eli, judge, | 40 |
| Samuel, judge, | 19 |
| Saul, king, | 20 |
| David, | 40 |
| Solomon to beginning of temple, | 3 |
| | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/> |
| | 4 ²⁰ |
| | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/> |

VI. The Book of Judges consists of three clearly marked divisions—

1. The *Introduction* (chaps. i.–iii. 6).
2. The *Narrative of the Judges* (chaps. iii. 7–xvi. 31).
3. The *Appendix* (chaps. xvii.–xxi.).

1. The *Introduction* (chaps. i.–iii. 6)—without which, as Keil has remarked, the historical narrative would want a foundation—resolves itself into two parts :—

- (1.) The *first Preface* (chaps. i.–ii. 5), which is principally a geographical summary and a recapitulation of facts, contains an account of what the different tribes did, or did not, accomplish with regard to the expulsion of the inhabitants

of the land, commencing with the actions of Judah and Simeon in the capture and punishment of Adoni-bezek (i.e. *The Lord of Bezek* or *Lightning*, cf. Luke x. 18), whom they brought to Jerusalem, which city had already been captured by Judah; and recounting Caleb's bestowal of his daughter Achsah on Othniel as a reward for his capture of Kirjath-sepher (*City of Books*, in LXX. πόλις γραμμάτων), and the rebuke of the people by the angel of the Lord at Bochim (or *Weepers*) for their disobedience.

[In many respects there is a strong similarity between this introductory preface and the appendix (cf. i. 1-21 with xx. 18, and i. 34 with xviii. 1-31, and i. 1, 2 with xx. 26-28, etc.). There is a certain degree of *obscurity* about this portion of the book, because, while the first verse speaks of the circumstances about to be narrated as happening *after the death* of Joshua, the events recorded in the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter really occurred in Joshua's lifetime, having been previously related in the Book of Joshua; and besides this, the account in Judges (ii. 8, 9) terminates with the narrative of the death and burial of Joshua. Hence (as we have before remarked in the notes on the previous book) it would seem evident that the events mentioned in the beginning of the Book of Judges took place *before* Joshua's death, who probably resigned his active duties, and closed his public career, some time before his death actually took place.]

- (2.) The *second Preface* (chaps. ii. 6–iii. 6), which is chiefly occupied with general moral reflections, warnings, and exhortations in connection with the subsequent history, and exhibits the *religious attitude* of the Israelites to their God, as the former preface had exhibited the *political* relation of the Israelites to the Canaanites. It shows the cause of the power of the Canaanites and the impotence of Israel; telling us of the sufferings and calamities of the Israelites when they fell away from the service of the one true God into idolatry; and how, on their repentance and prayers, deliverers were raised up, not in their own strength, but in God's, and by His divine commission; all which is in confirmation of the threatenings and promises which God had previously given by Moses (ii. 15, 20). It is also worthy of note that, in the *general* descriptions and warnings in the preface, the identical language is employed which is afterwards used in the *particular* narratives of the events in their respective places in the history (cf. iii. 7, 8, x. 6, 7, 16, vi. 1, viii. 33, etc.).

2. The *Narrative of the Judges* (chaps. iii. 7–xvi.).

This constitutes the main body of the book, which is flanked on either side by a preface and an appendix. It consists of an account of the thirteen judges who were raised up to deliver the Israelites, from the death of Joshua to the time of Eli, of six of whom an account more or less full is given, while the doings of the remaining seven are passed over in the very briefest manner. We have no regular and systematic history

of the Israelites here given, but a 'series of brilliant, striking pictures, now of one portion of the tribes, now of another. Of some epochs minute details are given; other periods of eight or ten years, nay, even of twenty, forty, or eighty years, are disposed of in four or five words.'

No doubt where we meet with such minute details, coupled with such graphic descriptions, we are reading the narratives of eye-witnesses or contemporaries of the acts themselves, which were handed down traditionally, composed when these events were 'living realities' in the minds of those who wrote the accounts, when the different incidents were all fresh in the mind, glowing with all the vividness of contemporary feeling, as *e.g.* 'Ehud's dagger and left hand; Egion's fatness, his summer chamber, and the parlour key; Jabin's iron chariots, and Jael's bottle of milk; Sisera's heavy slumber, and Deborah's glorious ode; the desolations of the Midianites, the secret threshing of Gideon, the altar of Baal at Ophrah, the common talk of the Abiezrites, the stratagem of Gideon and his victories, the seditions and divisions of the mixed population of Shechem, the fable of Jotham, the reign of Abimelech, the speeches of Jephthah, and the sacrifice of his daughter.'¹

It is a striking picture of a wild and rude period of history that is brought before the mind, in which the dark storm-clouds of national cruelty, depravity, idolatry, ignorance, and crime are ever and anon lighted up by the lightning-flashes of courage, heroism, faith, and tenderness, manifested by those heroic judges, who were supernaturally influenced to rise up and redeem God's chosen but rebellious people.

¹ See *Speaker's Commentary*, Introduction, vol. ii. p. 117.

As we find '*The Angel of the Covenant*' giving his commission to Moses, who was filled with the Spirit of the Lord above all other men for the work which he had to perform, and as we find him bestowing this Spirit on the seventy elders, and especially on his successor Joshua; so, too, do we find '*The Angel of the Lord*,' or '*The Angel of God*' (cf. ii. 1, vi. 11, xiii. 6, 9, 13), specially manifesting himself to the people, or rulers of the people, on four successive occasions during this period:—(a) We find the Angel of the Lord going up from Gilgal to Bochim, warning and threatening the people for their neglect of duty, after which the Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel (ii. 1-5). (b) The Angel of the Lord came and gave a commission to Gideon to deliver Israel, and in order to prepare him for his work, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, investing him with power for his arduous task (vi. 11, 34). (c) '*The Spirit of the Lord*,' we read, '*came upon Jephthah*' (xi. 29); after a passage so similar in its language to the one recording the appearance of the angel of the Lord at Bochim, that it would appear that the '*Lord*' named means the Angel of the Lord (x. 10 seq.). (d) The angel of the Lord appeared unto the father and mother of Samson, announcing the birth of their son (xiii. 3-23), and then we find that '*the Spirit of the Lord began to move him*' (vv. 24, 25), and '*the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.*' In accordance with this fourfold appearance of '*the Angel of the Lord*,' some have divided the narrative portion of the book into four periods.

This central body of the work seems to fall under six divisions or sections.

Sec. i. (chap. iii. 7-11). The servitude of the Eastern Israelites to Chushan-rishathaim (*i.e.* *Ethiopian*,

of *double evil* or *wrong*), the king of Mesopotamia (Heb. Aram-naharaim, *Aram* (Hales), 1427 *of the two rivers*, the Euphrates and (Keil), *circ.* the Tigris), for eight years, from 1394 (E.V.) which they were delivered by *Othniel*,¹ or *Lion of God* (the first judge), the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, the land having rest for forty years.

Sec. ii. (chap. iii. 12-31). (a) The servitude of the Eastern Israelites to Eglon (*i.e.* large *bull-calf*, Simonis; *vitulinus*, Gesen.), king of Moab, aided by the children of Ammon and Amalek, for eighteen years, from which they were delivered by *Ehud*,² *i.e.* *union* (Keil), *circ.* (the second judge), the son of Gera 1336 (E.V.) (or of Gemini, marg.), a Benjamite, who was left-handed. He slew Eglon craftily³ with a dagger, when sitting in a summer parlour alone, and blowing the trumpet in Mount Ephraim, summoned the Israelites, who,

¹ Cf. Othni, 1 Chron. xxvi. 7. It is doubtful whether Kenaz was 'his father, or, as is more probable, the more remote ancestor and head of the tribe, whose descendants were called Kenezites (Num. xxxii. 12), or sons of Kenaz. If Jephunneh was Caleb's father, then probably he was father of Othniel also.' Cf. for Othniel's genealogy, 1 Chron. iv. 13, 14, and Judith vi. 15. There is an ambiguity in Judg. iii. 9. Jerome translates it: 'Othniel filius Cenez, frater Caleb junior.'

² He is called by Josephus *ναῖσις*, a young man. In the marg. reading 'left-handed' is explained as 'shut of his right hand,' which might mean either 'left-handed,' and not able to use his right hand; or making use of his left hand as well and easily as his right; *ἀμφιδέξις*, LXX., or Vulg. 'qui utraque manu pro dextra utebatur.' The incidents in the case of Eglon are somewhat differently described in Josephus, who makes no mention of Eglon's obesity; 'crassus,' Vulg.

³ 'Ehud's conduct must be judged according to the spirit of those times,' Keil *in loc.*; cf. *Speaker's Commentary*, Note, and Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary on the Acts*.

at the fords of the Jordan, slew 10,000 valiant men of Moab; and the land had rest eighty years. (b) The Western Israelites were afterwards delivered by *Shamgar*¹ (the third judge), whose name is of uncertain etymology, the son of Anath, from the Philistines, of whom he slew 600 men with an ox-goad, a formidable weapon in the hand of a strong man.

Sec. iii. (chaps. iv. v.). The Northern Israelites (according to the marginal note), after being in grievous servitude for twenty years to Jabin ('the discerning,' a name given to the kings of Canaan from their supposed *intelligence* = νοήμων), who reigned in Hazor (now *rebuilt*, cf. Josh. xi. 1-10), whose captain was Sisera, a name equivalent perhaps to *lieutenant*, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles,² were delivered by *Deborah*,³ a prophetess (the fourth judge), the wife of Lapidoth (i.e. *flames* or *firebrands*), who dwelt or sat beneath the palm tree,—a well-known and solitary landmark,' the palm being an *exceptional* tree (cf. Stanley's *Sinai*

B.C. 1406
(Hales), 1269
(Keil), *circ.*
1296 (E. V.).

¹ He was probably of the tribe of Naphtali, though Ewald thinks he was of the tribe of Dan. In his days (see v. 6) the 'highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways,' or 'crooked ways,' the country being in so unsafe and dangerous a condition.

² Cf. Dr. Thomson, *Land and Book*, chap. xxix., for its probable situation.

³ *Deborah* = 'a bee.' The bee was the symbol of regal authority with the Egyptians, and amongst the Greeks the word was applied to poets (cf. Hor. *Carm.* iv. 2. 27), 'More *apis* *Matinæ*;' by the Neoplatonists to those who were remarkably chaste, and especially to the priestesses of Delphi (Χρησμοῖς μιλίσσας Δελφίδος, Pind.). In both these senses it has been said (see Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 419) the name suits her, since she was essentially a vates or seer, combining the functions of poetry and prophecy.

and *Palestine*, p. 143),—between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim, where the Israelites came to her for judgment, and by *Barak* (*i.e.* lightning, Ex. xix. 16 = Barca or Barcas, the Carthaginian name), the son of Abinoam (the fifth judge), whom she summoned to her out of Kedesh-naphtali in order to fight with Sisera at the river Kishon. Sisera's host was utterly defeated,¹ and he himself perished by the hand of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who had treacherously invited him into her tent.

The *song* of Deborah and Barak follows,—a triumphal ode, which is regarded by Bishop Lowth as a sublime specimen of Hebrew poetry. There is allusion in it (v. 4, 5) to the display of divine power and majesty on Mount Sinai nearly 200 years before. Thus the land had rest forty years.

We may observe during these three periods of servitude a gradual advance in their severity; first, in their length; the first being for eight years, the second for eighteen, and the third for twenty; secondly, in regard to the position of their oppressors, the king of Mesopotamia living at a distance, and hence his attacks must have been less frequent; next, the kings of Moab, Ammon and Amalek being close neighbours, and so more frequent assailants; and lastly, Jabin, king of Hazor, in Canaan, living in the midst of the Israelites, and feeling all the animosity which the king of a race doomed

¹ Cf. Stanley's *Lectures on Jewish Church*, Lect. xiv., for a brilliant description of the rout. See also *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 335.

to destruction would naturally feel, one of his race having been already destroyed by Joshua. (See Keil, p. 244.)

Sec. iv. (chaps. vi.-x. 5). The Eastern and Northern Israelites being delivered for seven years into the hands of Midian, Amalek, and the children of the East, cry unto the Lord in their despair, who answered them by the voice of a prophet. The 'Angel of the Lord' calls upon *Gideon* (the sixth judge)—B. C. 1359 (Hales), 1222 (Keil), circ. 1249 (E. V.). whose name signifies 'cutter down,' or 'hewer,' *i.e.* a brave warrior, the son of Joash the Abi-ezrite—to go and save Israel. His hesitation is removed by a miracle on the part of the angel. At the command of God he destroys his father's idolatrous altar, cuts down his grove (or *Asherah*, *i.e.* wooden image of Astarté), and builds an altar to the Lord, with the help of ten of his servants, by night, to the indignation of the men of the city. The Midianites pitch in the valley of Jezreel, or plain of Esdraelon—the 'battlefield of Palestine.' Gideon summons the different tribes; the sign of the fleece of wool is granted him. Gideon, ordered to reduce his force to the 300 men who lapped water, utterly routs the Midianite hosts, and captures and slays their chiefs. Under him the land had rest forty years. He died in a good old age, and was buried in his father's sepulchre in Ophrah. After his death the people made Baal-berith (*i.e.* the God of covenants or sworn treaties, the *Zeus Orkius* of the Greeks) their god, and remembered not the Lord, nor Gideon.

Abimelech (i.e. *Father-King*), by conspiracy with the Shechemites, and the murder of all his seventy brethren except Jotham, the youngest, is made *king*, for neither is the title of *judge* ever assigned to him, nor any part of the verb signifying to judge ever employed of his rule. Jotham rebuked them by his parable of the trees choosing a king,—the oldest extant *fable*, the only other one of the kind in Scripture being found in 2 Kings xiv. 9,—and foretold their destruction, and fled. After a reign of three years he crushes a great conspiracy of the Shechemites against himself, and is wounded by a woman when attacking the tower of Thebez, and slain by his armour-bearer at his own request.

B.C. 1316
(Hales), 1182
(Keil), *circ.*
1209 (E.V.).

Then *Tola* (the seventh judge), the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, of Issachar, judged Israel for twenty-three years, dwelling in Shamir in Mount Ephraim, where he died, and was buried.

B.C. 1293
(Hales), 1156
(Keil), *circ.*
1183 (E.V.).

After him *Jair* (the eighth judge), a (or *the*) Gileadite, judged Israel twenty-two years, having thirty sons (thirty-two in LXX. in each case) who rode on thirty ass-colts and possessed thirty cities,¹ called Havoth-jair, *the villages of Jair* (cf. Num. xxxii. 41; in I Chron. ii. 22 the number is twenty-three), unto this

¹ The word for 'asses' and for 'cities' is identically the same in the Hebrew. The play upon the words is kept up in the LXX. *πόλους* and *πόλεις*.

day. He died, and was buried in Camon (not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, but probably the Kamoun of Polybius (v. 70. 12); it is called in LXX. Rhamnon).

The time occupied in this section is much shorter than that which is covered by the first three sections, which together practically form *one* systematic period; viz. 95 as compared with 206 years. But though the servitude is very brief, of not more than seven years' duration, yet its nature would seem to have been very severe, since the produce of the soil of the land was continually destroyed by the raids of neighbouring foes, and the Israelites themselves were driven to fly to the caves of the mountains in order to escape.

Sec. v. (chaps. x. 6–xii.). Again the Israelites 'did evil in the sight of the Lord.' In consequence of this, God's anger was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and of the children of Ammon, who vexed and crushed the Israelites eighteen years.

Jephthah,¹ the ninth judge, was raised up for their deliverance. He 'vowed a vow unto the Lord,' that, if successful and returning in peace from his war with the Ammonites, he would offer up for a burnt-offering that which should

B.C. 1253
(Hales), 1116
(Keil), *circ.*
1143 (E.V.).

¹ 'How much more intelligible (says Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 325) does Jephthah become, when we remember that he was raised up, not from the regular settlements of Judah and Ephraim, but from the half-civilised region of the Eastern tribes; in the wildness of his freebooting life, in the rashness and ignorance of his vow, in the savage vengeance which he exacted from the insolence of Ephraim,—a Bedouin chief rather than an Israelitish judge.' In agreement with this view, it has been

come forth of the doors of his house to meet him, and it should surely be the Lord's. Jephthah then defeated the Ammonites with a very great slaughter. On his return to his house at Mizpah, his daughter, who was his only child, came forth to meet him with timbrels and with dances. On seeing her he rent his clothes, and cried, 'Alas, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.'¹

Jephthah next crushed an insurrection of the Ephraimites, and died, after having judged Israel only six years, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

After him *Ibzan* (tenth judge),
B. C. 1247
(Hales), 1110 of Bethlehem (perhaps in Zebulon),
(Keil), circ. was judge. He judged Israel seven
1137 (E. V.). years, and died, and was buried
 at Bethlehem.

remarked: 'Jephthah was led, as well by the unsettled character of the age as by his own family circumstances, to adopt a kind of life unrestrained, adventurous, and insecure as that of a Scottish border chieftain in the Middle Ages. It was not unlike the life which David afterwards led at Ziklag' (Smith's *Bible Dict.* p. 963).

¹ As to the question whether Jephthah did actually offer his daughter as a burnt-offering, which would certainly seem to be asserted in the Bible,—however awful the idea may be, we may say that the *Jewish* writers, for a thousand years after Christ, till the time of Kimchi, including Josephus, all believed that he did thus offer her; and so, too, a long array of *Christian* writers, including a great majority of the early Fathers, entertained the same belief, though none of them extenuate the act. But some writers, as Bishop Hall, Waterland, Hengstenberg, Keil, and others, in opposition to this opinion, have maintained that he did not sacrifice his daughter, but devoted her to a life of religious seclusion and perpetual celibacy. (See Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, where the question is fully and carefully worked out; article 'Jephthah,' by Rev. W. T. Bullock, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*; and Keil in his *Commentary*, pp. 388-395.)

After him *Elon*, the eleventh judge, the Zebulonite, judged Israel for ten years, and died, and was buried in Aijalon, in the country of Zebulon.

B.C. 1240
(Hales), 1103
(Keil), *circ.*
1130 (E.V.).

And after him, *Abdon*, the twelfth judge, the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel eight years, and died, and was buried in Pirathon (probably the modern *Fersta*, near Shechem), in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

B.C. 1230
(Hales), 1093
(Keil), *circ.*
1120 (E.V.).

Though in this period there was only one servitude, yet it lasted eighteen years, as against seven in the preceding period, and was inflicted by the combination of Philistines and Ammonites. The Israelites had sinned even more grievously than before, and God had at first refused to save them; and when Jephthah was appointed judge, we find internal treason springing up among the Ephraimites, which aggravated the sufferings of the Israelites, just as Abimelech's usurpation had before done. The whole time of this epoch was less than either of the two preceding ones, viz. only forty-nine years.

Sec. vi. (chaps. xiii.–xvi. 31). Again Israel falls into sin, and the Lord delivers the Israelites into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. This section is entirely occupied with a description of the birth, marriage, riddle, mighty deeds, and death of *Samson* the son of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, the thirteenth judge. He judged Israel twenty years.

R.C. 1182
 (Hales), 1094
 (Keil), *circ.*
 1120 (E.V.).

Samson,¹ who has been called the 'Danite Hero,' and whose history has no exact parallel in Holy Scripture, desired a wife from Timnath² of the Philistines, and requested his father and mother to get her for him. They objected at first to procure a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines; but he insisted. Nor did they know that 'it was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines,' who had dominion at that time over Israel. The tribe of Dan was a 'link between the Philistines and Israel.'

As Samson, with his father and mother, were going down to Timnath, a young lion (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 36 and 1 Kings xiii. 24)³ roared when

¹ According to derivation the word probably means 'little sun,' or 'sun-like;' but according to Josephus it means *strong*, *ισχυρός*. If *Shemesh* has, according to Gesenius, the signification of 'astonishment' or 'awe,' it would represent the feelings of his parents in reference to the angel. According to some, it is derived from a word which signifies to 'minister,' in reference to his dedication to God's service as a Nazarite.

² More accurately written *Timnathah* (in Josh. xix. 43 named *Thimnathah*, as one of the towns belonging to Dan). Its modern name is *Tibneh*, situated about three miles to the S.W. of Zorah. Hence Samson is said to 'go down' to Timnath from Zorah. It is named in LXX. *Θαμναθά*, and in Vulg. also *Thamnatha*. 'It contained vineyards, haunted, however, by such savage animals as indicated that the population was but sparse.'

³ The 'mountain country,' or the 'hill country of Judah,' was 'more than half a wilderness, the lair of the savage beasts, of which the traces gradually disappear as we advance into the interior.' It has been remarked by Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 160, note, that 'the "lions" of Scripture occur usually in or near these mountains, e.g. that of Samson, and that of the prophet of Bethel, and the "lion and the bear" of David's shepherd-youth. Compare, too, the frequency of names derived from wild beasts in those parts, "shual," "shaalbim" (foxes and jackals), Josh. xv. 28, xix. 3, 42; Judg. i. 35; cf. also Judg. xv. 4: "Lebaoth" (lionesses); Josh. xv. 32, xix. 6; the ravine of hyenas (Zeboim), 1 Sam. xiii. 18; valley of stags (Ajalon), Judg. i. 35; Josh. xix. 42.' Cf. *ibid.* p. 206, note.

meeting him at the vineyards. Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid ; but he concealed the fact from his parents. After a time he returned to Timnath to take her, and turning aside to see the carcase of the lion, he found a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase,¹ and he eat thereof, and gave to his father and mother, but did not say whence he procured the honey. According to the custom of the young men, Samson made a feast here, and thirty companions were invited to it. Samson proposes a riddle² to them, and promises, if they solve it within the seven days of the feast, to give them thirty sheets (*marg.* 'shirts,' *i.e.* loose linen garments ; 'sindonas,' Vulg., from the cognate word in LXX.), and thirty changes of garments (in Vulg. 'tunicas') ; if not, they were to give the same to him. His riddle was, 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.' Unable in three days to expound the riddle, they go to Samson's wife on the seventh day, and ask her to entice her husband to declare the enigma ; if not, they threaten to burn her and her father's house with fire. Overcome at length by her entreaties, Samson tells her the answer, which she at once reveals to her people, who, on the

¹ In Herod. v. 114, we read of bees filling the skull of Onesilus with honey ; but that it was a *rare* circumstance we may refer to Shakespeare (*Henry IV.* Part ii. act iv. sc. 4), 'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb in the dead carrion.'

² The riddle which was proposed to Ædipus by the Sphinx is of a very similar nature. The word used in LXX. for Heb. 'chidah' is *πρόβλημα*, and so Vulg. 'problema.'

seventh day, at even, say to Samson, 'What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?' He replied, 'If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.' And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men, and took their spoil (*marg.* 'apparel; ' the word means something *drawn off*), and gave changes of garments to those who expounded the riddle. In anger he went up to his father's house (at Zorah); but his 'wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend,' *i.e.* as friend of the bridegroom.

Shortly after this, in the time of the wheat harvest, Samson catches 300 foxes (or rather 'jackals,' which abounded in the neighbourhood of Joppa and Gaza), ties them tail to tail, putting a firebrand between them, and turns them loose into the standing corn¹ of the Philistines. Both corn and vineyards were destroyed by the fire. The Philistines learn-

¹ 'The most striking and characteristic feature of Philistia is its immense plain of *cornfields*, stretching from the edge of the sandy tract right up to the very wall of the Hills of Judah, which look down its whole length from north to south. These rich fields must have been the great source at once of the power and the value of Philistia, the cause of its frequent aggressions on Israel, and of the unceasing efforts of Israel to master the territory. It was in fact a "little Egypt." These are the fields of "standing corn," with "vineyards and olives" amongst them, into which the Danite hero sent down the 300 "jackals" (*shualim*) from the neighbouring hills. In the dark openings here and there, seen from far, in the face of those blue hills, were the fortresses of Dan, whence Samson "went down" (chap. xiv. 1, 5, 7) into the plain. In the *caves* which pierce the sides of the limestone cliffs of Lekieh and Deir-Dabban, may probably be found the refuge of Samson in the "cliff" Etam (chap. xv. 8, 13), before his victory with the jaw-bone' (Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 256, 257).

ing, after inquiry, that Samson had done this because the Timnite had given his wife to his companion, went and burnt her and her father with fire. Samson wreaks vengeance on them for this, and smote them 'hip and thigh' with a great slaughter.

He then went down and dwelt in the top (or 'the cleft') of the rock Etam. The Philistines went up, pitched in Judah, and spread themselves (cf. 2 Sam. v. 18, 22) in Lehi. When asked by the men of Judah why they came, they answered, to bind Samson, and treat him as he had treated them. Then 3000 men of Judah went to the cleft of the rock Etam, and having asked Samson why, when the Philistines were lords over them, he had done this thing; he replied, that he had done to them only what they had done to him. They tell him that they were come to bind him, and deliver him up to the Philistines, swearing unto him that they would not fall upon him themselves. After this they bind him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock; and when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him, and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords on his arms became as flax burnt in the fire,—'cords to me were threads, touched with the flame,'—and his hands were freed from the bands. Finding a new (*marg.* 'moist') jaw-bone of an ass,—'his sword of bone,' *Sams. Ago.*,—he slew with it 1000 men, saying, 'Heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.' And when he had made an end of speaking

(the Vulg. says 'canens,' regarding it as a song of triumph), he cast the jaw-bone out of his hand, and named the place Ramath-lehi (*i.e.* the 'lifting up' or the 'casting away' of the jaw-bone, *marg.*; or, as some render it, the 'height' or 'hill of Lehi'). When he was sore athirst, and prayed for relief, God clave a hollow place in the jaw-bone (or 'the hollow place or basin which is in Lehi,' from which hollow or 'mortar' a spring burst out), and water came thereout, and his spirit came again, and he revived; and he called the name of the place En-hakkore (*i.e.* 'the well of him that called or cried,' *marg.*).¹

Then went Samson to Gaza, and the inhabitants wait for him at the gate of the city all night. Samson rose at midnight, and carried off the doors, and posts, and bar of the gate on his shoulders, and bore them away to the top of a hill (perhaps El-Montar, S.E. of Gaza), which is before, or 'in face' of Hebron.²

¹ Compare the description in *Samson Agonistes* :—

'God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay,
After the brunt of battle, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring.'

It is remarked by Bishop Hall,—'God, who had fetched water out of the flint for Israel, fetched it out of a bone for Samson. He gave him honey from the mouth of the lion, and water from the mouth of an ass. Who will not cheerfully depend on Him who can fetch moisture out of dryness, and life out of death?'

² Josephus (in his *Antiq.* v. 8. 10) represents him as carrying them to the mountain that is *above* Hebron. And Milton (*Samson Agon.*) says :—

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

Samson subsequently loved a woman in the valley (or by the brook) of Sorek (a village close to his native place, Zorah) named Delilah (*i.e.* perhaps 'effeminate' or 'delicate'), a 'light, venal woman,' it has been thought, of 'his own tribe, the tribe of Dan.' The lords of the Philistines urge her to find out wherein his great strength lay, saying, that they would every one give her 1100 pieces of silver (a very large sum (cf. xvii. 3), 5500 shekels of silver being almost equal to two talents, *i.e.* nearly £500). She entices Samson, who first deceives her, but at last reveals to her the secret of his strength. Wearied by her entreaties, so that 'his soul was vexed unto death' (cf. Num. xxi. 4 for phrase), he 'told her all his heart,' saying, that if, being a Nazarite, his hair was shaven off, he should become as other men. She summons the lords of the Philistines, and, as he slept upon her knees, the seven locks of his head were shaven off, and his strength went from him ;¹ but he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

The Philistines took him, put out his eyes, bound him with two brazen fetters, and brought him to Gaza, and made him grind in the prison-house. But the hair of his head began to grow again. Then the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon (from *dag*, a fish, 1 Chron. x. 10 ; 1 Sam. v. 4 ; cf. Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii.

¹ Cf. Milton, *Samson Agon.* :—

'God, when He gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.'

p. 466), because he had delivered Samson, their enemy, into their hands; and the people rejoiced and praised their god (cf. Dan. v. 4), and called for Samson to make sport for them; and they placed him between the pillars on which the house rested. And when (probably feigning weariness) he had asked the lad who led him to put his hands upon the pillars of the roof, upon which there were about 3000 men and women, after praying earnestly to God for strength, he took hold of the two middle supporting pillars, and with a mighty effort pulled down the house upon them and himself, so that he slew more at his death than he had slain during his life.

His brethren and all his father's house came down and took him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol (cf. xiii. 25), in the burying-place of his father Manoah.

The time of his judgeship was an almost continuous period of servitude. The life of the nation seems entirely lost to view. Samson alone stands forth as its representative.

Thus ends the list of the *extraordinary* judges, and so closes the dispensation which is peculiarly called the Rule of the Judges (Ruth i. 1).

After Samson, however, two more civil judges ruled—Eli and Samuel.

Eli—descended from Aaron through Ithamar, the youngest of his two surviving sons—combined at the same time the offices of high priest and judge. The people, in their despair at the death of Samson, may have looked to

the priestly office and power as affording a means of stability which they could not see elsewhere. For forty years he judged the people (cf. 1 Sam. iv. 18. In LXX. it is stated as *twenty* years. He may, perhaps, have been *sole* judge for twenty, and *co-judge* with Samson for the remaining time). After his death and that of his two sons, who died on the same day with him,—a day sadly memorable on account of the capture of the ark of God,—during some twenty years a period of lawlessness and insecurity followed, in which the ordinances of religion were unobserved—the ark had passed away from Israel—the spirit of the people was broken—and in which there was no open vision, and the word of the Lord was precious.

Then *Samuel*—devoted to God's service from his birth, a prophet to whom God revealed His will and purposes (1 Sam. iii. 19–21; Acts iii. 24)—was constituted judge (1 Sam. vii. 15–17), and when he himself grew old he appointed his sons co-judges (1 Sam. viii. 1), though after his death they were not deemed worthy of being his successors in the office of judge. Samuel's 'prophetic labours' (remarks Keil, p. 242) 'formed the link between the period of the judges and the introduction of royalty into Israel.'

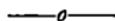
3. An *Appendix* closes the book (chaps. xvii.–xxi. 25), containing two principal divisions. The Book of Ruth was indeed, in ancient times, included in the Book of Judges, its first verse bearing testimony to the close connection between them—'Now it came to pass in the

days when the judges judged.' The last chapters of the Book of Judges give a narrative which shows how idolatry was introduced amongst the Israelites, and the sad and manifest deterioration in morality which followed from this idolatrous spirit, together with the chastisements by which the Israelites were visited in consequence at the hands of external enemies to whom they were given up.

- (1.) In chaps. xvii. and xviii. 31, we have the story of the graven image of Micah and its worship, its capture by the Danites, and removal to Laish.
- (2.) From chaps. xix. to xxi. ad fin. is contained the narrative of an atrocious crime committed by the Benjamites, which is resented by the other tribes, and ends in the almost entire destruction of the Benjamites.

R U T H.

R U T H.



As a singular example of virtue and piety in a rude age and among an idolatrous people, as one of the first-fruits of the Gentile harvest gathered into the Church, as the heroine of a story of exquisite beauty and simplicity, as illustrating in her history the workings of Divine Providence, and the truth of the saying that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous," and for the many interesting revelations of ancient domestic and social customs which are associated with her story, Ruth has always held a foremost place among the Scripture characters.'

LORD ARTHUR C. HERVEY.

THE Book of Ruth¹ is most closely connected with the Book of Judges, and might fairly be placed as an appendix to that book, though, nevertheless, it possesses an independent and distinctive character of its own. In our own Authorized Version, indeed, it follows the Book of Judges and precedes the Books of Samuel, as is also the case in the LXX., the Vulgate, the Lutheran, and other versions; but in the present² Hebrew Bible it has its place among the Hagiographa, before Lamentations, and after the Song of Solomon, in combination with

¹ רֹוּת: 'Povθ, LXX.; Ruth, Vulg., which some think is for רֹוּת, signifying 'beauty,' and others for רֵעוּת, 'a friend,' the feminine of Reu. The Chaldee paraphrast regards Ruth, though without any valid grounds, as the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab.

² In the *ancient* Jewish canon in Jerome's time—as confirmed by his statement, and that of Eusebius, when giving Origen's catalogue of the sacred books (vi. chap. 25)—Judges and Ruth formed but one book.

Ecclesiastes and Esther, as the second of the five megilloth, or sacred rolls read at the chief Jewish festivals. It is publicly read in the synagogues at the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, on account of the harvest being mentioned in it.

There is an air of truthfulness and historical reality about this book,—pervaded though it may be by a poetic spirit, together with a graphic and picturesque power of description, and an originality of conception on the part of the writer,—a carefulness in research, a familiarity with the customs and manners of the times, a literary taste and ability, a power of appreciating, grasping, and delineating character, a capability of combining the learned with the artistic, and of clothing the past with all the lifelike attributes of present existence, which separate off this attractive story from a mere ‘fictitious’ narrative (as it has been designated by Bertholdt¹), and stamp it with the indelible impress of historic truth.

Ruth affords a bright and cheering contrast to the Book of Judges. In the latter we have a gloomy picture of dark and violent deeds, of rapine and plunder, of wars and battles, of estrangement from the one true God, of spiritual declension, of idolatry and rebellion, of rash and reckless acts, of slaughter and extermination. The sad refrain is always sounding in our ears: ‘In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes.’

But the transition from Judges to Ruth is like passing out of some dark overshadowing cloud into bright and glorious sunlight,—from scenes of confusion, uproar, and unrest into those of quietness and peace. The veil is, as it were, lifted up, and we are suddenly admitted into scenes of gentle country life, amid sunny fields and

¹ And perhaps by Palfrey, in his *Academical Lectures*.

golden harvests, and into homes bright with the cheerful atmosphere of truthfulness, modesty, and love, where piety prevails, and everyday life is hallowed by the presence of religious devotion and patriarchal simplicity. We seem to pass, so to speak, from the 'dark, terrific scenes of a tragedy of Æschylus to the fresh and beautiful landscapes of some pastoral idyl of Theocritus.' And this contrast comes out all the more vividly when we think that the scene of the Book of Ruth is nevertheless laid, as we read in the first verse, 'in the days when the judges ruled,' as well as in the very place which stood prominently forth with so sad and evil a reputation in the former book (cf. Judg. xvii. and xix.).

We trace in Boaz¹ the type of a wealthy landlord in his domestic relations; devoted to the best interests of his dependants; honourable, affable, and kind to all alike, whether his equals or inferiors; wise, moderate, careful in his conduct; obedient to the laws; observant of the obligations by which he was bound; diligent in the fulfilment of the duties of his station; manifesting the strongest faith in his religion and his God; tender-hearted towards the unknown stranger and wanderer; careful to observe the rites and institutions of his native land; not unmindful of his kindred, their claims and their wants. And, again, in Ruth the Moabitess—the heroine of a story which beautifully illustrates God's watchful care over the righteous—we trace a firm and unflinching attachment to the service of that God whom she had chosen to follow and obey, combined with a clinging, loving, filial tenderness and devotion to her bereaved and desolate, though resolute and warm-

¹ בֹּאֵז, *i.e.* 'fleetness;' בּוֹזָ, LXX.; Booz, Vulg. Cf. Matt. i. 5. In the Jerusalem Talmud he is identified with the judge Ibsan.

hearted mother-in-law (to whom she was bound by the bond of a common grief), and an unfaltering constancy to the memory of her departed husband, so different to the forgetful indifference of her sister Orpah.¹

We cannot doubt that this touching narrative of mutual love, tenderness, and faith was designed to teach the Church of God at all times the blessedness which accompanies holy living,—the blessedness which is shed upon homes of chastity and virtue, in which the daily walk and conversation is sanctified by religious principles and religious observances. It was designed to teach men how the ordinary duties of common life may be ennobled and elevated by the presence of a religious spirit; how a conscientious discharge of the work of each day merits God's approval; how quiet and retired country homes may be bright with the rays of the Divine presence when dark clouds hang gloomily over the nation or the kingdom; how there may be a remnant—an election of grace—who have not bowed the knee to Baal, even when the national character is deeply tainted with irreligion and idolatry.

Moreover, this short but deeply interesting appendix to the Book of Judges was probably written with yet another design. The name of Ruth is, as it were, sanctified by appearing in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, as given in the Gospel of St. Matthew (chap. i. 5). In addition to herself, three other women (viz. Tamar, Rahab, and the wife of Urias) are inserted in the genealogy of Christ. The fact of her insertion may be designed to show us that Gentiles as well as Jews are interested in that genealogy. Ruth the Moabitess appeals to the Christian Church as an evidence that

¹ The greatness of her virtue, says St. Jerome, was the measure of the greatness of her reward.

Christ was born not only for the sake of the Jews, but for the Gentiles also; and thus St. Jerome says that Ruth's name appears in the genealogy, 'ut Gentium vocatio à Christo facienda in Ruth Gentili præsignificaretur.' It supplies, moreover, 'some connecting links in the chain of evidence which proves the truth of Jacob's prophecy, that Shiloh or Messiah should come of Judah. Here we have a statement of the succession from Judah in an unbroken line to David.'

And, in its connection with the Book of Judges, we may observe that it gives the line of David through the entire period of the judges,—from Salmon who fought under Joshua to Jesse the Bethlehemite. We see that this Salmon was the grandfather of Obed, who was the grandfather of David, and so that there were four long generations during the time of the judges.¹

Many of the learned among the Jews have regarded *Samuel* as the author of this book, which is a very natural supposition, especially on the hypothesis that he was the author of the Book of Judges. And this view, adopted by the Rabbis, has been held by many other writers.

Against this opinion many modern critics have contended (as *e.g.* Ewald,² De Wette, Eichhorn, etc.), on

¹ Some writers conceive that (as is the case in the genealogy of our Lord) some names have been omitted in the genealogy at the end of Ruth,—either (according to Eichhorn) from imperfect data, or (according to Keil) from design, the principal persons only in the genealogy being inserted,—thinking that the father and the grandfather of Boaz have been left out. If no omissions are supposed, then, with Carpzov, we must suppose that Boaz was one hundred and eleven when Obed was born, and that Obed and Jesse were equally old when they had sons.

² According to the conjecture of Ewald, approved of by Bertheau, Ruth originally belonged to a larger work, which he conjecturally imagines was taken by the final redactor of the Books of Samuel, and incorporated after Judges and before Samuel.

the supposition that it contains many *Chaldaisms*,¹ which stamp it as being of much later date.²

But, as Dr. Pusey has remarked (*Lectures on Daniel*, p. 312), the language has this remarkable characteristic, that the forms which, in the generally pure Hebrew of the book, look like *Chaldaisms*, occur in conversation (not in the narrative, but the dialogue), and so represent the language of peasant-life. Such archaic forms, indeed, are not only evidences of the antiquity and authenticity of the book, but they are also singularly appropriate in a narrative which opens out to our view the peaceful scenes of ancient domestic life in Palestine, in which such forms of expression might not unnaturally be expected to occur.

We may allow that the Book of Ruth, in its style of expression and modes of thought, has many points of resemblance to passages in the Books of Samuel and Kings,³ but they are of too general a character, and not of sufficient importance to lead us to draw from them the inference that the Book of Ruth was written at a late period in the Jewish history. There are also passing references to be discovered in Ruth to other books of the Old Testament.⁴ In the New Testament the Book

¹ *Chaldaisms* or *Archaisms* occur in chaps. ii. 8, 9, 21, iii. 3, 4, i. 13, 20. See Keil (for instances), p. 469. On the other hand, see Davidson, pp. 486, 487, who thinks from these *Chaldaisms*, as he judges them to be, the writer of the book lived in the time of Hezekiah.

² Some critics have ascribed its authorship to Hezekiah, others to Ezra.

³ Compare Ruth i. 9, 14, 17, 22, ii. 20, iv. 1, with 2 Kings vi. 8, 1 Sam. xxi. 2, 1 Kings ii. 23, 1 Sam. iii. 17, xxiv. 16, xxx. 4, 2 Sam. xxi. 9; Ruth i. 16 with 2 Kings ii. 4-6; Ruth ii. 10 with 1 Sam. xxv. 41; Ruth iv. 15 with 1 Sam. i. 8; Ruth ii. 14 with 1 Sam. ix. 23, 24; Ruth ii. 5 with 1 Sam. xvii. 55.

⁴ Such, perhaps, as the following:—to Genesis, in Ruth iv. 11, 12 (cf. marg. ref.); to Leviticus, in Ruth ii. 2, iv. 4; to Deuteronomy, in Ruth iv. 7, 10, 11, iii. 13, ii. 2, i. 11; to Judges, in Ruth i. 1.

of Ruth is not referred to except in the genealogy, to which reference has been already made.

It would, perhaps, be a strain upon the *typical* language of Scripture, and militate somewhat with what we have already said on the subject of typology, if we interpreted the history of Ruth in a mystical and allegorical manner, regarding her, with some of the ancient Christian Fathers,¹ as a type of the Church, and Boaz as a figure of Christ, assigning also a mystic meaning to the *place* Bethlehem, and to the *time* when the incidents occurred, and to the threshing-floor where Boaz winnowed the corn.

But though we can scarcely regard either Ruth or Boaz as types, in accordance with strict principles of typology, there is nevertheless a deep interest thrown over the history of Ruth the Moabitess, who, like Cornelius in the New Testament, was one of the first-fruits of the gathering in of the Gentiles into the fold of Christ, and an evidence accordingly of the comprehensive nature of divine grace.² There is a difficulty in fixing the chronology of the Book of Ruth, from the fact that St. Matthew, in his genealogy of Christ (chap. i. 5, 6), makes Salmon, the father of Boaz, marry Rahab, and Boaz is stated to be the grandfather of David, who was born about 360 years after the siege of Jericho,—a length of time during which it is scarcely conceivable

¹ Cf. St. Jerome, 'Ruth in typum Ecclesie' (*ad Jovinian. lib. i.*); or Ambrose, 'Christus est sponsus, cui illa (Ruth) venit ex gentibus sponsa;' so also Origen and Chrysostom, and Bede, *Quest. in Ruth.* The typical and figurative meanings have been worked out very minutely and elaborately by Bishop Wordsworth.

² Cf. St. Augustine, vol. vi. p. 632, c., 'Proinde sancta Ruth, cum semen quale illo tempore necessarium fuit in Israel non haberet, mortuo viro quæsit alterum de quo haberet . . . non audeo jam dicere beatiorem fuisse Annæ viduitatem quam illius fecunditatem.'

that only Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, three persons, should have intervened between Rahab and David. But there would be nothing strange in the supposition that certain names of undistinguished persons might have been omitted in the copy of the genealogy from which St. Matthew may have derived his information. Some writers, however, have supposed that the progenitors of David, and so of the Messiah, may have been endued with a longer life and a greater measure of strength than falls to the lot of the ordinary run of men. Jesse, we know, was regarded as an old man when David was only a youth (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 12); and since Boaz is represented as the great-grandfather of David, it would seem evident that the date of this book cannot be so low as the time of Eli, assigned by Josephus (as Horne has shown), nor so high as the time of Shamgar; the most probable period, he thinks, being that stated by Bishop Patrick, viz. during the judicature of Gideon, or about 1241 B.C. (A.M. 2759).¹

The *genealogy* at the close of the narrative clearly reveals the scope of the whole history. It forms not only the *end* (as Keil has remarked, p. 466), but the *starting-point* of the history contained in the book. For though we would not attach such great importance to

¹ The time of the narrative in Ruth has been variously given. By Josephus and others, it has been referred to the days of Eli; by Augustine, to the time of the kings; by Moldenhauer, following certain Jewish writers, to the days of Ehud; by Junius, to the time of Deborah; by Archbishop Usher, to the judgeship of Shamgar; by Bishop Patrick and Keil (the view is opposed by Davidson), to the days of Gideon, when a famine is said to have happened (Judg. vi. 3-6); by Rabbi Kimchi and other Jewish writers it has been supposed that Boaz is identical with Ibzan, the judge who succeeded Jephthah (see Horne's *Introduction*, iv. pp. 43, 44); by Dr. Davidson the narrative has been referred to the time of the Philistine dominion, when either Abdon or Eli was judge.

it, as to say, with Auberlen, that the Book of Ruth contains, as it were, the spiritually moral background of the genealogies which play so significant a part even in the Israelitish antiquity ; yet so much is unquestionably true, that the book contains a historical picture from the family life of the ancestor of David, intended to show how those ancestors of the king walked before God and man in piety, singleness of heart, and in modesty and purity of life, and how from such ancestors—occupying no posts of worldly splendour or pre-eminence—was the man descended in whom all the nature of Israel was to find its royal concentration and fullest expression,—the monarch who was to be the central point of Jewish history.

Analysis of Ruth :—We may trace in this short book three somewhat-clearly marked divisions.

Sec. i. (chap. i.). In consequence of a severe *famine* in the land of Judah in the days when the judges judged, *Elimelech* (i.e. *to whom God is king*), a man of Bethlehem-Judah, an Ephraimite, with his wife *Naomi* (i.e. *gracious, pleasant*), and his two sons, *Mahlon* (i.e. *sick, weakly*) and *Chilion* (i.e. *pinning*), emigrated into the land of Moab, and continued there. After the death of their father Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion married two women, natives of the country, *Orpah* and *Ruth*. The two sons died, and their widowed mother Naomi, at the end of ten years, determined to return to her own land. They set out together ; and when Naomi earnestly dissuaded her daughters-in-law from accompanying her, Ruth clave unto her, but Orpah went back 'to her people and

her gods.' Naomi and Ruth journeyed on till they arrived at Bethlehem, at the beginning of barley-harvest.

Sec. ii. (chaps. ii., iii., iv. 1-12). And Ruth, with the sanction of her mother-in-law, went out into the fields to glean for their mutual support, and chanced to light upon the fields (in Hebrew, 'her chance chanced to hit upon the field') of Boaz, a near kinsman of Elimelech, who, having heard a good report of her virtue, and her faithfulness to Naomi, treated her with great kindness and liberality. Encouraged by this kindness, Naomi instructs Ruth that she should lie at Boaz' feet and request him to perform the part of kinsman (or 'Göel' or 'Redeemer,' cf. Lev. xxv. 26, 48, 49). Boaz expresses his willingness to perform the kinsman's part, if another relative more closely allied than himself should decline to perform this duty.¹ He sends her away to her mother-in-law with six measures of barley in her broad upper garment ('pallium,' Vulg.), perhaps a large shawl, which she spread out to receive it. Then Boaz calls at the city-gate — the forum where business was transacted—upon the nearest kinsman to

¹ 'According to the theocratical rights, Jehovah was the actual owner of the land which He had given to His people for their inheritance; and the Israelites themselves had merely the usufruct of the land which they received by lot for their inheritance, so that the existing possessor could not part with the family portion or sell it at his will, but it was to remain for ever in his family. When any one therefore was obliged to sell his inheritance on account of poverty, and actually did sell it, it was the duty of the nearest relation to redeem it as *Göel*. But if it should not be redeemed, it came back, in the next year of jubilee, to its original owner or his heirs without compensation' (Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary*, p. 481).

redeem the inheritance of Elimelech; but he declines to redeem, in accordance with the ancient rite of the people,—the old custom, namely, of taking off the shoe and giving it to another (a custom which existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans), and which arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil; and hence taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership (cf. Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary*, p. 490).

Sect. iii. (chap. iv. 13 ad fin.). Boaz accordingly complies with the custom, redeems the inheritance, and marries Ruth. She bears *Obed* (i.e. *the serving one*, one who lived entirely to render service to his grandmother Naomi), the grandfather of David, and Naomi became nurse to the child. The generations or genealogy of *Pharez* (cf. Gen. xxxviii. 29; Num. xxvi. 20) down to David are given (cf. Matt. i. 3 seq.).