

***DAVID
BARON***



***THE ANCIENT
SCRIPTURES AND
THE MODERN JEW***

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The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE printing of a second edition of this book within the same year that the first edition was published is a matter of thankfulness to the author, who has received a large number of appreciative letters about it; and it may be regarded as a proof of growing interest in the stupendous question with which it deals.

The press notices, too, have, on the whole, been favourable. What adverse criticism there has been, has, so far as I know, been directed almost entirely against the expository part of the volume, partly on account of my attitude in relation to the views of a certain school of modern criticism with regard to the Old Testament Scriptures. Some of my reviewers have also expressed regret that the subject of the "Modern Jew," which is so interesting in itself, should not have been treated independently of the Scriptures. But "I believe, and therefore have I spoken." The Jew still remains the most irrefutable witness to the historical character and supernatural element of the Scripture narrative, and it is only in the light of the revealed plan, that we can see light, on the very comprehensive and perplexing "Jewish Question," which, apart from Scripture, will for ever remain an enigma beyond solution.

September 29th 1901.

Preface

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ONE or two explanations are all that is necessary by way of preface to this work. It will be noticed that it is divided into two parts. The first consists of connected expositions of some of the most striking prophetic utterances in the ancient Scriptures. They are independent Bible Studies of very solemn and momentous subjects, but arranged in a continuous and progressive order, showing that the revolving centuries unfold an eternal purpose, and that prophecy was history written in advance, in order, as I said elsewhere, " that in succeeding ages men, by comparing the Divine forecasts in Scripture with the actual condition of things, might learn to know that there is an omniscient God; one who first makes His counsel known, and then causes all things to work together towards the carrying out, and fulfilment, of that which He declared beforehand, should come to pass."

I have had no controversial end in view in writing these pages, my aim being simply, by the help of God, to show the harmonies of Scripture, and to unfold His wonderful and gracious purposes as revealed in His holy Word. While so engaged my eyes and heart have been continually lifted up to the God of Israel, not only for light and guidance, but that He would condescend to use this inadequate and unworthy effort, as a means of blessing and spiritual profit to His people.

It was my intention, had time permitted, to add four or five other expositions to the first part of the volume, but

much pressure of other work, in this country and abroad, has prevented my doing so at present.

In the second part, in which I have embodied material from some of my articles in *The Scattered Nation*, and from one or two previously published booklets, my aim has been to present from a Christian and Bible stand-point an all-round view of "The Jewish Question" a question which will press itself more and more upon the attention of the nations, and the development of which must be watched with the greatest possible interest by all intelligent observers of the signs of the times, who believe in the words of the Psalmist, that "when the Lord shall rebuild Zion, He shall appear in His glory."

To those who are themselves "watchmen on the walls of Zion," some of the facts in the second part may be already familiar, but I venture in all modesty to quote the following words of Pascal, as applicable to this part of the book: "Let no one say I have said nothing new. The disposition of my matter is new. In playing tennis two men play with the same ball, but one places it better. It might as truly be said that my words have been used before. And if the same thoughts in a different arrangement do not form a different discourse, so neither do the same words in a different arrangement form different thoughts."

As will be seen, I have allowed one of the most eloquent of modern Jews himself to state the case of the "general condition" of his nation at the end of the nineteenth century, the remarkable address quoted, being as far as possible, a literal rendering by Mrs. Baron, of that which Dr. Max Nordau delivered at the first Zionist Congress in Basle.

I have also embodied a short article, or rather address, on " The Religious Condition of the Jews from a Christian Point of View," by my esteemed friend and fellow-worker in the " Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel," the Rev. C. A. Schonberger.

I need only add that to many of my readers I shall not appear altogether a stranger. It is about sixteen years since my first attempt towards the elucidation of parts of the Hebrew Scriptures was published in " Rays of Messiah's Glory," and although there are passages in that book (at present out of print), which require re- writing, and I am even more conscious now than I was at the time of its publication of imperfections in its plan and composition, the Lord has been pleased to put His seal upon that unworthy effort to magnify His Word, and Him who is its very life and substance. Many have been the testimonies, some even from very highly honoured servants of Christ, to light and blessing received through its pages. Since then some of my smaller publications have had a fairly large circulation both in England and America, one of them, "The Jewish Problem; or, Israel's Present and Future," having been translated into six different languages.

And now I commend this book, the result of spare moments saved in a very busy life of service for Christ among His own nation, to Him who condescends to bless the things that are weak and small, and pray that wherever it goes it may carry a blessing with it, not only to Christians, but to my own brethren and " kins- men according to the flesh," for whom my heart does not cease to yearn, with the yearning of Him who shed tears over Jerusalem, and who

died for " that nation," and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

DAVID BARON.

23, BOSCASTLE ROAD, LONDON, N.W.

November 3rd, 1900.

I. The Interregnum and "Afterward"

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"And the Lord said unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend and an adulteress, even as the Lord loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife: so will I also be toward thee.

" For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without an image, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall come with fear unto the Lord and to His goodness in the latter days." HOSEA iii.

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The short chapter of five verses (Hosea iii.), which is to form our first subject, divides itself naturally into two parts, the first three verses being the record of a symbolical transaction, and the last two verses a verbal prophecy. The two parts are, however, vitally connected, for the symbolism of the first verses serves as an illustration of the truth presented in the prophecy, while the prophecy is an explanation of the symbolical transaction. There is, in fact, but one great truth in reference to Israel in this chapter

which the Spirit of God wants to teach us in a twofold way; first by an illustration, and then by a verbal explanation.

If we want to know the meaning of the seemingly strange transaction recorded in the first part of the chapter, we find it in a sentence in the first verse, which says that it is "according to," or "like unto, the love of Jehovah for the children of Israel "; and being an illustration of so lofty and glorious a theme, it is worthy a careful consideration.

The prophet is told to go again and love a woman *

1 Some have supposed the transaction to have been ideal and that it did not form an actual experience of the prophet's life; but

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who is beloved of her " friend," or her " husband " (as it is rightly rendered in the margin of the Revised Version), but who is an adulteress. There can be little doubt that the " woman " is Corner, of whom we read in the first chapter; and the " friend " or " husband " is the prophet, who went through this sad experience in his wedded life in order that himself and his family might serve as "signs and wonders in Israel" (Isa. viii. 18), in order to set forth realistically before their very eyes Jehovah's attitude to and dealings with His faithless people.

To begin with, when the prophet first took her into marriage relationship with him there was nothing lovable about Corner; she was, in fact, a poor fallen woman. It was undeserved favour and great condescension manifested on the part of the prophet which placed her in the position of

his wedded wife; but it is just for this very reason that this transaction seems, though imperfectly, to set forth " the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel." Why did God first choose Israel to be a people unto Himself? Was it because of any- thing good or lovable in them? Np; wholly of grace and sovereign was the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel. In Deuteronomy, after warning them not to think that it was because of anything in them not because of their goodness, or righteousness, for they were a " stiff-necked people "; not because they were greater or more in number, for they were " fewest of all people," God condescends to give a reason for His choice, and it is a strange and wonderful reason. " I loved you," He says, " because I loved you," because I

while the truth it is meant to illustrate would not be affected, even though it were a figure without actuality in real life, the whole account is so realistic, and even passionate, that it seems to me impossible to regard it as anything but literal history.

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chose to love you, and "because I would keep the oath which I had sworn unto your fathers," which oath and promise was also wholly of grace and not of merit.

But let us proceed to the second stage of the prophet's relation and attitude to this woman.

After she became his wedded wife she forsook him and went to another man, but in spite of the intensity of her guilt and her ingratitude, the prophet did not cease to love her. This is touchingly expressed by the words, " beloved by her

mate, yet an adulteress "; and in this, too, it resembles God's dealings with and attitude to Israel. Wonderful was the relationship into which the stiff-necked nation was brought. Well might Moses in his last words exclaim, " Happy art thou, O Israel, who is a people like unto thee! " " For thy Maker is thy husband: Jehovah of Sabbaoth is His name." But instead of entering into the blessedness of this relationship with Jehovah, Israel " looked to other gods," and committed spiritual adultery with idols; and instead of finding all their joy in fellowship with Him, they became sensual, and " loved flagons of wine " or " cakes of raisins." And yet, although the condition of Israel is well illustrated by this poor adulteress, the blessed truth which this transaction is meant to teach, and which Christians are so slow to learn, is that Jehovah still loves Israel. Yes, even now, while righteously given over into the hands of her enemies, a proverb and a byword among the nations, Israel is, and remains, " the dearly beloved of His soul" (Jer. xii. 7), and God narrowly and jealously watches the conduct of the nations toward them (Zech. i. 14, 15); for, although fellowship is broken off, and " in a little wrath He has hid His face from them for a moment," the marriage bond between Jehovah and the nation He has betrothed unto Him for ever (Hosea ii. 19) is indissoluble, and His " gifts and

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calling are without repentance." "Jehovah, the God of Israel saith that He hateth putting away " (Mai. ii. 16). This, His wonderful covenant faithfulness, is Jehovah's secret

towards them that fear Him. " I am Jehovah," He says, " I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

And this infinite grace and " love of Jehovah " toward the children of Israel find their parallel also in the experience of the Church.

Why did God call us from among Jew and Gentile during this present dispensation to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation"? Was it because we were better or wiser than the rest of the world? Oh, no, " for ye see your calling, brethren," says the Apostle, echoing the warnings which were given to Israel of old, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." Was it for our goodness or righteousness? Oh, no; " but God commendeth (or displays) His own love toward us " (Rom. v. 8) a love inconceivable by man " in that while we were yet sinners," utterly lost and utterly wretched, " Christ died for us."

Israel's history and God's dealings with them is no encouragement to the Christian to think lightly of sin and of backsliding from God, for we see that God is a jealous God, visiting the sins of His people even more than on the sins of the world; but it also displays the marvellous faithfulness of Jehovah and His love towards His redeemed, which all the many waters of their sins and backslidings cannot quench.

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In the second verse we get a glimpse of the innate worthlessness of Israel and all such as are typified by poor Gomer. Sin, in her case, as it always does, implied a certain kind of bondage, so that she had to be bought back from the sharer of her guilt. But what is the price she is valued at? Just half the price of a dead slave (Exod. xxi. 32), 1 with an homer and a half of barley thrown into the bargain. The redemption price which the great God actually pays for those as worthless as this poor woman is more than tongue can tell. It cannot be estimated by all the precious but corruptible things known to man. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire; the gold and the crystal cannot equal it, and "the exchange of it shall not be for vessels of fine gold." It is nothing less than the precious blood of Christ, "as a lamb without blemish and without spot."

We must touch on one more significant item in the symbolism before we proceed with the verbal prophecy.

Having bought Gomer back, the prophet gives her a charge. "And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide (or remain) for me many days ... so will I also be towards thee." There was to be a neutral period. She was no more to follow sin, but she was not yet to enter into her conjugal rights. Meanwhile her husband would be her guardian, and ultimately there would be a full restoration of the fellowship implied in the marriage relationship. The symbolical significance of this is, I believe, as follows. A remnant of the nation was brought back

1 Keil, in /oc., thinks, however, that the "homer" and "lethech," which together made fifteen baths or ephas of barley, might also be valued at fifteen shekels, so that the silver and barley together may perhaps have been equal to the full price, or rather the full amount of compensation for a slave if gored to death.

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from Babylon after the seventy years' bondage, and then commenced the neutral period during which Israel is neither guilty of their old besetting sin of idolatry which, as already explained, is regarded as spiritual adultery nor are they living in fellowship with Jehovah; for, although there has been an outward return, there has never yet taken place that national change of heart for which God is waiting before He can return unto them in mercies. Indeed, soon after the commencement of this period Israel, though no longer guilty of idolatry, showed how their heart was still alienated from God by disowning Him who is " the brightness of His glory and an exact representation of His very Being." But there is hope in their end. Israel, though sitting desolate and, to human view, forsaken, abides through these " many days "for God, who will yet fully restore the blessings of the relationship into which He once entered with them, even as He announces through this same prophet: " I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know Jehovah " (Hosea ii. 19, 20).

We now come to the verbal message which explains the symbolism of the first part of this chapter. The connection will be seen at a glance if we compare the words addressed to Gomer in verse 3, " Many days shalt thou abide for me," with the first words of verse 4, " For many days shall the children of Israel abide." Israel, then, stands in relation to this woman as anti- type to type, and the many days of the neutral condition of Gomer was but a foreshadowing of the "many days" of the neutral condition of Israel in relation to Jehovah and to idolatry. The fourth verse is, I might say, the great prophecy in the Old Testa-

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ment with regard to the Interregnum, a period covered by the image of Daniel ii. and the New Testament expression, "the times of the Gentiles" the time during which the sceptre is departed from Judah, and representative governmental power is entrusted to the Gentile nations until those times are fulfilled, and Zion becomes the centre of government for the earth, and the place whence God's law will go forth, as never before, to all nations.

It is of interest to observe that the most authoritative Jewish commentators have themselves admitted that the fourth verse of our chapter gives a graphic description of the present condition of the Jewish people. I translate the following passage from one of the greatest of Rabbinic writers. 1 Speaking on the expression " many days," he says: " These are the days of this present captivity, in which we are in the power of the Gentiles, and in the power of

their kings and princes, and we are ' without a sacrifice and without an image,' i.e., without a sacrifice to God, and without an image to false gods; and ' without an ephod, and without teraphim,' t.e., without an ephod to God, by means of which we could foretell the future, as with the Urim and Thummim; and without teraphim to false gods. And this is the present condition of all the children of Israel in this present captivity."

To this interpretation every critical Bible student, whether Jew or Christian, must subscribe. We shall see presently what this admission on the part of a great non-Christian Jew implies.

1 Kimchi, commonly called by the Jews " Redak," from the initial letters of " Rabbi David Kimchi," was born in Narbonne in 1160, and died about 1235. So great was his fame that the Jews applied to him, by a play of words, a Talmudic saying (Aboth. iii. 17), adapted to mean, " No Kimchi, no understanding of the Scriptures."

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The order of the words in the fourth verse is somewhat different in the original from what it is in the A.V. It begins with the expression, " many days:> " Many days shall the children of Israel abide" and then it goes on to describe the special conditions under which they will abide. The words " Yamim rabbim " ("many days") are a Hebrew idiom denoting a long, indefinite period, embracing days, years, centuries, or even millenniums, and the first item in this remarkable prophecy really is, that for a long, unmeasured period the children of Israel would " abide," that is, remain or continue

to exist. I have elsewhere dealt fully with the marvel of the continued existence of the Jewish nation, ¹ but I would here in passing simply remind my readers that if the Jewish people, in spite of all the forces which have for many centuries been brought to bear against them with terrible severity, still lives, it is to testify to the truth of this and other statements of the Word of God. God has said, " Many days shall the children of Israel abide," and therefore no force in the universe is able to move them. God has called them

¹ See my book, "The Jewish Problem." "The world has by this time discovered," said Lord Beaconsfield, " that it is impos- sible to destroy the Jews. The attempt to extirpate them has been made under the most favourable auspices and on the largest scale; the most considerable means that man could command have been pertinaciously applied to this object for the longest period of recorded time. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic princes, and holy inquisitors have alike devoted their energies to the fulfilment of this common purpose. Expatria- tion, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious and massacre on the most extensive scale, a curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws which would have broken the heart of another people, have been tried, and in vain. The Jews, after all this havoc, probably more numerous at this date than they were during the reign of Solomon the wise, are found in all lands, and prospering in most."

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"Am Olam," the "everlasting people" (Isa. xliv. 7, Hebrew), and therefore the Jewish nation has proved indestructible.

But the marvel of Israel's continued existence becomes intensified if we examine the conditions under which they abide. Apart from the little word translated "without," which in the Hebrew is repeated five times, there are but six words used by the pen of inspiration to portray the condition of Israel during the Interregnum, and these six words contain more than a whole volume that could be written by the most eloquent human pen.

The six words are arranged in three couplets, or pairs of contrasts, which graphically describe a neutral state. The three pairs of contrasts, or opposites, are these:

I. " Without a king and without a prince."

II. " Without a sacrifice and without an image."

III. " Without an ephod and without teraphim." Let us examine each one separately.

" Without a king and without a prince" What this means is, without the king of God's appointment, and without a prince of their own choice. When Hosea uttered this prediction he could already almost hear the sound of the steps of the Assyrian army on its way finally to overthrow the kingdom of the ten tribes. Hosea's ministry, which commenced in the reign of Jeroboam II., extended into the reign of Hoshea, the last king who reigned in Israel a period of about sixty years so that the prophet may himself have witnessed the fulfilment of the threatening part of his prophecies, in the overthrow of Samaria, and the captivity of the ten tribes. But the prophecy with which we are dealing is

not limited to the northern kingdom of the ten tribes, the term *' the children of

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Israel " being, I believe, used in the proper and larger sense as embracing all the descendants of the one man who by the Divine authority was called " Israel."

The geographical centre of prophecy, except when otherwise stated, is always Jerusalem, and in Divine forecasts of the chief outlines of Jewish history the schism between the ten tribes and the two, which was permitted by God as a punishment on the house of David, and was to be but temporary in its character, is overlooked. We know that Samaria was finally over- thrown in the year 721 B.C., when the history of the ten tribes as a separate kingdom terminated for ever. When the great restoration takes place God says, " I will make them one nation in the land upon the moun- tains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezek. xxxvii. 22). The one king who shall be " king to them all " is the true David, " David's greater Son," who will raise up the tabernacle of David, and " close up the breaches thereof," caused by the defection of the ten tribes; and He is " the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

Judah continued as a kingdom about one hundred and thirty years longer after the captivity of the ten tribes, until the sceptre was finally plucked out of the hands of the house of David by Nebuchadnezzar, that " head of gold " of Daniel's great vision, the first king of the four great world-

powers, whose united course makes up " the times of the Gentiles."

Now, there is a point in connection with this subject which is of immense interest, showing also that prophecy does indeed emanate from the omniscient God who alone knows the end from the beginning. About the time of the final overthrow of Judah, in the reign of the last king who sat on the throne of David, another prophet

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was sent by God with the following mysterious and startling message on this subject: " Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall not be " (or, " is no more it" I no longer recognise it): " exalt the low, abase the high " (let anarchy and usurpation of the throne of David continue). " I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also " (whatever men may put up instead of Davidic rule on Mount Zion) " shall not be " (shall not be permitted to continue long) " until He come whose right it is; to Him it shall be given " (Ezek. xxi. 25-27). And as God has spoken by the mouth of His prophet so it has been. Centuries elapsed between Ezekiel's prophecy and the coming of our Lord Jesus. Nineteen centuries have elapsed since, but there has been no restoration of the throne of David; no one of the seed of David reigning over Israel on Mount Zion.

Some might think of the Hasmonean and Herodian kings of Jerusalem as militating against the truth of this assertion, but these were but incidents in the process of the overturning and usurpation foretold in the above prophecy.

The Hasmoneans were priests of the tribe of Levi, who, though heroes and martyrs For Israel's faith and worship, had no right to assume royalty, which dignity in Israel God promised and confirmed by oath as an everlasting possession to the house of David; and as for Herod, he was an Idumaeen and Roman vassal. " This also shall not be, until He come whose right it is; to Him it shall be given." Who is it whose right it is? Who is the true and lawful King of Israel? Of course every Christian answers, " Jesus," He was born " King of the Jews " (Matt. ii. 2), and even on the cross on which He died was written " Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." This is truth, but not the whole truth. The rightful King of Israel is Jehovah* for the

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uniqueness of Israel's high calling consisted more particularly in this, that it was destined to be a theocracy that is, a people whose visible head and leader is God. If we want to know what is implied in a theocracy we find it expressed in one verse by the prophet Isaiah when speaking of a future time when it shall be fully realised: " For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our law-giver (or war prince), Jehovah is our King; and He will bring us salvation," or " He also will be our Saviour" (Isa. xxxiii. 22). " Jehovah is our king ": hence at an early period of Israel's history when they came to Samuel saying: " Make us a king to judge us like all the nations "; and Samuel, in not altogether unselfish displeasure, prayed to God about it, the Lord answered him saying, " Hearken to the voice of the people . . . for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I

should not reign over them " (i Sam. viii. 7). Well, God " gave them a king in His anger, and took him away in His wrath." Saul, at the time of his election, was just such a one as answered to man's ideal of a leader and king, but although he was granted a fair trial, he proved a failure, and serves as an object-lesson that man's rule is not like God's. Eventually God Himself appointed a royal family in Israel; but what was God's purpose in the establishment of the Davidic house? Was it not that from that family there should ultimately spring one in whom the theocratic ideal would be fully realised; one who, " although of their brethren," and " from the midst of them " (Deut. xviii. 15-18) should yet be Jehovah-Zidkenu the mighty God, whose reign would be the reign of God, and whose kingdom would be " the kingdom of heaven " on earth? In the interval the mere human kings of the house of David were regarded as types, and God's repre- sentatives. Thus we read that when Solomon com-

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menced his rule " he sat on the throne of 'Jehovah as king instead of David his father (i Chron. xxix. 23). The throne was Jehovah's, and Solomon and his successors only occupied it until the real king, Jehovah's true representative should appear. Hence it is that even when Israel had kings they were always pointed onward to another king: " Behold a king shall reign in righteous- ness, and princes shall rule in judgment "; or, in the words of Jeremiah, " Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch and a king shall reign and prosper." Did they not have kings at the time these prophecies were uttered? Yes;

but those kings were mere shadows filling up the gap in time until the true king should be manifested, " He who is the blessed and only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords." This also is the reason why in the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah is sometimes spoken of as the advent of God: " Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah," and yet He who was thus to come is the sent One, " the man whose name is the Branch."

In the fulness of time one in whom this ideal was fully realised did appear, and before His birth the following announcement was made to His mother: " Be- hold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus " (what can be more human? but it goes on); " He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Here is that One for whose manifestation the ages were waiting, the " Im- manuel," God in man, "He whose right it is," not merely because through His mother He is the true Son of

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David, but because He is the Son of the Highest; the irradiated brightness of His glory, and exact representation of the very Being of God, who, as we have seen, is the true King of Israel. Oh, if Israel had known the day of their visitation! if they had recognised that the child born in such humble circumstances in one of their families was none other than the long-expected Messiah, " the Lord of glory,"

the long indefinite period of the " many days " would have terminated, and Israel would no longer have been without the longed for king. But Israel did not know, neither did they understand, and instead of hailing Him with acclamation, they said, " Not this man we will not have this man to reign over us." Early in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, impressed by His miracle-working power, they would have taken Him by force and made Him king, but their ideals of the Messianic kingdom were altogether different from His. They wanted a kingdom, but Christ preached the kingdom of heaven, or of God; and so afterwards, when they saw that their carnal expectations would not be realised, they did indeed put a crown on His head, but it was of thorns. They handed Him over to Pilate, and when that weak Roman functionary ironically remonstrated with them, saying, " Shall I crucify your king? " they replied, " We have no king but Caesar "; and having thus deliberately put themselves afresh under the yoke of Gentile rule, they are permitted to have a good long taste of it, in order that they may learn the difference between the rule of God and the yoke of the Gentiles. This is why the children of Israel still " abide without a king," and until they bow their knee in lowly homage before Him whom in ignorance they once despised and scorned, they will continue so to remain. Anyhow, this is an indisputable fact, that the Lord Jesus of Nazareth is the last in Jewish history whose descent

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from the royal line of David can now be established by sufficiently authentic proof. There are Jews and Gentiles at

the present day who cavil at the New Testament genealogies, overlooking the fact that there is ample proof in the New Testament of the Davidic descent of our Lord, apart even from the genealogical records. But the difficulties in the genealogies arise not from inaccuracies, but from obscurities, which could, I believe, easily be cleared up if the national and tribal records from which they were compiled were still extant to appeal to. But since the destruction of the second Temple all these national genealogical records have perished, and apart from a few worthless traditions there is nothing that any Jew now on the face of the earth can appeal to to prove even from which tribe, not to say from which family, he springs. There is neither a tribe of Judah nor a separate Davidic family now existing, and yet the true king of Israel must prove Himself a son of David! 1

There is also this fact to be remembered, that when the claims of our Lord Jesus to Davidic descent were first asserted, they could easily have been disproved had it been possible to do so. Now, the Scribes and Pharisees among whom Christ moved were not at all slow to bring up anything they could possibly adduce which they thought would disprove His claims. Wilfully ignorant, for instance, that He was born in Bethlehem, they stigmatised Him as a "Nazarene," and said, "Search and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet "; yet although he was universally addressed as "Son of David" even by the beggars who sat by the wayside, and by a poor Gentile woman on the borders of Tyre and Sidon, His enemies never even ventured to whisper

1 See for an examination of this subject, " Die Worte Jesu," by Professor Gustaf Dalman, pp. 260-266.

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that He was not of the house of David. Afterwards^ when Paul and the other apostles went everywhere pro- claiming " Jesus Christ of the seed of David " as the very foundation of the gospel which they preached (2 Tim. ii. 8), if the Pharisees could have proved this one statement to be untrue, it would for ever have closed the mouths of these men, whom they regarded as a trouble and danger to the nation. They had serious consultations as to what could be done to put a stop to the wonderful movement in favour of Jesus of Nazareth. They threatened the apostles, they beat them, they again and again cast them into prison, but they never once dared say that He whom they preached as the seed of David and heir to His throne (Acts ii. 25-30) was not of the house of David at all. On the other hand we find that down to the sixth century, when the Talmud Babylon was compiled, the fact that Christ was of the Royal Davidic house was written deep on the consciousness of the Jewish nation, and shines out even from beneath the blasphemous legends which the Rabbis invented about Him in self-justification. 1 And not only

1 The following passage from Talmud, Sanhedrin, fol. 43, a., is most striking. " There is a tradition: On the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover they hung Jesus. And the herald went forth before him for forty days crying, ' Jesus goeth to be executed, because he has practised sorcery and seduced

Israel and estranged them from God. Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it,' but no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was hung on the eve of Sabbath and the Passover. Ulla said, 'But doest thou think that he belongs to those for whom a justifying plea is to be sought? He was a very seducer, and the Allmerciful has said, "Thou shalt not spare him, nor conceal him." ' But the case of Jesus stood differently because he stood near to the kingdom."

Laible, in "Jesus Christ in the Talmud," renders the last words, "for his place was near those in power," but this is unsatisfactory.

The name actually used in the original in this passage just

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is Israel "without a king" (or the king of God's appointment); they are also without a prince of their own choice, the Dispersion having made it an impossibility for them to have one head to rule and guide them; and it is an interesting fact that although since the modern emancipation of the Jews they have a large share in the government of all civilised nations a share altogether out of proportion to their actual numbers, and men of Jewish birth have been successful leaders of great parties, and even prime ministers they themselves are under Gentile rule, and cannot be governed by one of their own nation.

quoted is W "Yeshu/" which is an abbreviation of "Yemakh Shemoh vezikhroh," "Let his name and his memory be blotted out." This blasphemous substitution of "Yeshu "

for the precious name "Jesus" often occurs in Rabbinic literature, but Christian friends will remember that it is not our Lord Jesus as we know Him that poor Israel in ignorance thus blasphemes, but the caricature of Him as presented to them by apostate, persecuting Christendom in the dark ages. Often the only way left to the Jews to avenge their terrible sufferings and massacres was to write blasphemously of Him in whose name they were ignorantly perpetrated. Over against poor Israel's ignorant blasphemy of " Yemakh Shemoh vezikhroh " God has uttered His decree that the name of Jesus " shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psa. lxxii. 17).

That the legend refers to a well-known custom in the procedure of the Sanhedrim in trials for life, there is I think, no doubt, because one of their great maxims was, that "they sat to justify and not to condemn." That this humane custom of calling on those who had anything to bring forward in favour of the accused to come and declare it, was not observed in the trial of Jesus of Nazareth, for reasons well known to readers of the Gospel, is certain, but, as I have already stated, from beneath the blasphemous legend invented as a justification for poor Israel's blind leaders in reference to their conduct to the Holy One, there shines out this truth, that up to the sixth century, when the Talmud was compiled, it was admitted by His enemies that He was not only of the Davidic house, but that " he stood near to the kingdom."