

# BOOKS OF KINGS.

## CHAPTER I.

*1 Kings i.*

11 Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign. Go . . . unto King David, and say unto him, Didst thou not swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign?

15 And Bath-sheba went in unto the king. . . . And the king said, What wouldst thou?

17 And she said unto him, Thou swarest unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth.

22 And lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

21 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

28 Then King David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came and stood before the king.

29 And the king sware, and said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

30 Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord, King David, live for ever.

32 And King David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came.

33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:

34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon.

THESE books give an account of David's death, of his successor Solomon, of the division of his kingdom between the kings of Judah and of Israel, with an abstract of the history down to the captivity.

Neither the king nor Bath-sheba knew that Adonijah was making preparations to be crowned king the moment when he heard of David's death. He made a great feast, inviting all the king's sons except Solomon. He began his feast by a show of devotion, sacrificing sheep and oxen. But Nathan the Prophet warns the king and

Bath-sheba. In his anxiety he appeals to Bath-sheba as the one who has the greatest concern about Solomon, and can most easily get an audience with the king. He suggests that Solomon is not only in danger of losing his crown, but both he and she of losing their lives.

Accordingly, Bath-sheba, without being announced, enters the presence of the king. She takes no notice of the presence of Abishag, but makes known the object of her visit at once. She reminds the king of his vow to her that Solomon, her son, should be his successor to his throne. Nathan the Prophet is announced in the audience chamber and tells the king of the preparations that Adonijah is making to usurp the crown and throne, and appeals to him to keep his vow to Bath-sheba. He reminds him that the eyes of all Israel are upon him, and that David's word should be an oracle of honor unto them. He urged the king to immediate action and to put an end to all Adonijah's pretensions at once, which the king did; and Solomon was anointed by the chief priests and proclaimed king.

Adonijah had organized a party, recognizing him as king, as if David were already dead; but when a messenger brought the news that Solomon had been anointed king, in the midst of the feast their jollities were turned to mourning.

Nathan's visits to the king were always welcome, especially when he was sick and when something lay heavy on his heart. He came to the king, not as a petitioner, but as an ambassador from God, not merely to right the wrongs of individuals, but to maintain the honor of the nation.

As David grew older he suffered great depression of spirits, hence his physicians advised that he be surrounded with young company, who might cheer and comfort him with their own happiness and pleasure in life. He was specially cheered by the society of Abishag, the Shunammite, a maiden of great beauty and of many attractions in manner and conversation, and who created a most genial atmosphere in the palace of the king. Bath-sheba's ambition for her son was so all absorbing that she cared but little for the attentions of the king. David reigned forty years, seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem.

*1 Kings ii.*

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man.

It is a great pity that David's advice could not have been fortified by the honor and the uprightness of his own life. "Example is stronger than precept."

*1 Kings iii.*

16 Then came there two women unto the king, and stood before him.

17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house: and I was delivered of a child.

18 And it came to pass the third day after, this woman was delivered also:

19 And her child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 And when I rose in the morning it was dead; but when I had considered it, behold, it was not my son.

22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is

thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And he said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.

This case was opened in court, not by lawyers, but by the parties themselves, though both plaintiff and defendant were women. Commentators thing that it had already been tried in the lower courts, and the judges not being able to arrive at a satisfactory decision, preferred to submit the case to Solomon the King. It was an occasion of great interest; the halls of justice were crowded, all waiting with great expectation to hear what the king would say. When he said, "bring me my sword," the sages wondered if he intended to kill the parties, as the shortest way to end the case; but his proposition to kill only the living child and give half to each, showed such an intuitive knowledge of human nature that all were impressed with his wisdom, recognizing at once what the natural feelings of the mother would be. Solomon won great reputation by this judgment. The people feared his piercing eye ever after, knowing that he would see the real truth through all disguises and complications. E. C. S.

In Bath-sheba's interview with David one feature impresses me unfavorably, that she stood before the king instead of being seated during the conference. In the older apostolic churches the elder women and widows were provided with seats—only the young women stood; but in the instance which we are considering the faithful wife of many years, the mother of wise Solomon, stood before her husband. Then David, with the fear of death before his eyes and the warning words of the prophet ringing in his ears, remembered his oath to Bath-sheba. Bath-sheba, the wife of whom no moral wrong is spoken, except her obedience to David in the affairs of her first husband, bowed with her face to the earth and did reverence to the king.

This was entirely wrong: David should have arisen from his bed and done reverence to this woman, his wife, bowing his face to the earth. Yet we find this Bible teaching the subservience of woman to man, of the wife to the husband, of the queen to the king, ruling the world to-day. During the recent magnificent coronation ceremonies of the Czar, his wife, granddaughter of Victoria, Queen of England and Empress of India, who changed her religion in order to become Czarina, knelt before her husband while he momentarily placed the crown upon her brow. A kneeling wife at this era of civilization is proof that the degradation of woman continues from the time of Bath-sheba to that of Alexandria.

In 1 Kings ii. 13-25, we have a record of Solomon's treatment of that mother to whom he was indebted not only for his throne, but also for life itself. Adonijah, who had lost the kingdom, requested Bath-sheba's influence with Solomon that the fair young Abishag should be given to him for a wife. Having lost his father's kingdom, he thought to console himself with the maiden.

19 So Bath-sheba therefore went unto King Solomon to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat

down on his throne and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

All very well thus far; and the king, in his reception of his mother, showed to her the reverence and the respect which was due to her. Thus emboldened, Bath-sheba said:

20 I desire one small petition of thee; say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother; for I will not say thee nay.

21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah, thy brother, to wife.

But did King Solomon, who owed both throne and life to his mother, keep his word that he had just pledged to her, "Ask on, my mother; for I will not say thee nay?"

No indeed, for was she not a woman, a being to whom it was customary to make promises for the apparent purpose of breaking them; for the king, immediately forgetting his promise of one moment previously, cried out:

22 And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also: for he is mine elder brother.

23 Then King Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.

24 Now therefore, as the Lord liveth, who hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

Solomon was anxious to give credit to the Lord instead of his mother for having set him on the throne, and also to credit him with having kept his promise, while at the very same moment he was breaking his own promise to his mother. And this promise-breaking to women, taught in the Bible, has been incorporated into the laws of both England and the United States—a true union of Church and State where woman is concerned.

It is only a few years since that a suit was brought in England by a wife against a husband in order to compel the keeping of his ante-nuptial promise that the children of the marriage should be brought up in the mother's religious faith. Having married the woman, this husband and father found it convenient to break his word, ordering her to instruct the children in his own faith, and the highest court in England, that of Appeals, through the vice-chancellor, decided against her upon the ground that a wife has no rights in law against a husband. While a man's word broken at the gaming table renders him infamous, subjecting him to dishonor through life, a husband's pledged word to his wife in this nineteenth century of the Christian era is of no more worth than was the pledged word of



King Solomon to Bath-sheba in the tenth century before the Christian era.

The Albany Law Journal, commenting upon the Agar-Ellis case, declared the English decision to be in harmony with the general law in regard to religious education—the child is to be educated in the religion of its father. But in the case of Bath-sheba, Solomon's surprising acrobatic feat is the more remarkable from the reception which he at first gave to his mother. Not only did Solomon "say her nay," but poor Adonijah lost not only wife, but life also, because of her intercession.

This chapter closes with an account of Solomon's judgment between two mothers, each of whom claimed a living child as her own and the dead child as that of her rival. This judgment has often been referred to as showing the wisdom of Solomon. He understood a mother's boundless love, that the true mother would infinitely prefer that her rival should retain her infant than that the child should be divided between them.

However, this tale, like many another Biblical story, is found imbedded in the folk-lore-myths of other peoples and religions. Prof. White's "Warfare of Science and Theology" quotes Fansböll as finding it in "Buddhist Birth Stories." The able Biblical critic, Henry Macdonald, regards the Israelitish kings as wholly legendary, and Solomon as unreal as Mug Nuadat or Partholan; but let its history be real or unreal, the Bible accurately represents the condition of women under the Jewish patriarchal and the Christian monogamous religions.

M. J. G.

## CHAPTER II.

*1 Kings x.*

1 And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Solomon told her all her questions.

4 And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

9 Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel.

10 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: . . .

13 And King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked. So she turned and went to her own country.

**I**N the height of Solomon's piety and prosperity the Queen of Sheba came to visit him. She had heard of his great wealth and wisdom and desired to see if all was true. She was called the Queen of the South, supposed to be in Africa. The Christians in Ethiopia say to this day that she came from their country, and that Candace, spoken of in Acts viii., 27, was her successor. She was queen regent, sovereign of her country. Many a kingdom would have been deprived of its greatest blessing if the Salic law had been admitted into its constitution.

It was a great journey for the queen, with her retinue, to undertake. The reports of the magnificence of Solomon's surroundings, the temple of the Lord and the palace for the daughter of Pharaoh, roused her curiosity to see his wealth. The reports of his wisdom inspired her with the hope that she might obtain new ideas on the

science of government and help her to establish a more perfect system in her kingdom. She had heard of his piety, too, his religion and the God whom he worshiped, and his maxims of policy in morals and public life. She is mentioned again in the New Testament in Matthew xii., 42. She brought many valuable presents of gold, jewels, spices and precious stones to defray all the expenses of her retinue at Solomon's court, to show him that her country was worthy of honor and of respect.

The queen was greatly surprised with all that she saw, the reality surpassed her wildest imagination. Solomon's reception was most cordial and respectful, and he conversed with her as he would with a friendly king coming to visit from afar. This is the first account which we have in the Bible of a prolonged rational conversation with a woman on questions of public policy. He answered all her questions, though the commentators volunteer the opinion that some may have been frivolous and captious. As the text suggests no such idea, we have a right to assume that her conduct and conversation were pre-eminently judicious. Solomon did not suggest to the queen that she was out of her sphere, that home duties, children and the philosophy of domestic life were the proper subjects for her consideration; but he talked with her as one sovereign should with another.

She was deeply impressed by the elegance of his surroundings, the artistic effect of his table, and the gold, silver and glass, the skill of his servants, the perfect order which reigned throughout the palace, but more than all with his piety and wisdom, and his reverence when he went up to the temple to worship God or to make the customary offering. She wondered at such greatness and goodness combined in one man. Her visit was one succession of surprises; and she rejoiced to find that the truth of all that she had heard exceeded her expectations. She is spoken of in Psalms lxxii., 15, as a pattern for Solomon.

E. C. S.

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1 Kings xi.

1 But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites:

2 Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn

away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines:

4 It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God.

This is a sad story of Solomon's defection and degeneracy. As the Queen of Sheba did not have seven hundred husbands, she had time for travel and the observation of the great world outside of her domain. It is impossible to estimate the *ennui* a thousand women must have suffered crowded together, with only one old gentleman to contemplate; but he probably solaced their many hours with some of his choice songs, so appreciative of the charms of beautiful women. It is probable that his little volume of poems was in the hand of every woman, and that Solomon gave them occasional recitations on the imaginative and emotional nature of women. We have reason to believe that with his wisdom he gave as much variety to their lives as possible, and with fine oratory, graceful manners and gorgeous apparel made himself as attractive as the situation permitted.

E. C. S.

There have been a great number of different views held in regard to the Queen of Sheba, both in reference to the signification of the name "Sheba," and also in relation to the country from which this famous personage made a visit to Solomon. Abyssinia, Ethiopia, Persia and Arabia have each laid claim to this wise woman. Mene-lik, the present king of the former country, who so effectually defeated Italy in his recent war with that country, possesses the same name as, and claims descent from, the fabled son of this wise woman and of the wise king Solomon, one of whose numerous wives, it is traditionally said, she became. Ethiopia, the seat of a very ancient and great civilization, and whose capital was called Saba; Persia, where the worship of the sun and of fire originated; and Arabia, the country of gold, of frankincense and of myrrh, also claim her. It is to the latter country that this queen belonged.

Whether we look upon the Bible as a historical work, a mythological work, or, as many now do regard it, as "A Book of the Adepts, written by Initiates, for Initiates," a record of ancient mysteries hidden to all but initiates, the Queen of Sheba is a most interesting character.

The words Sab, Saba, Sheba, all have an astronomical or astrological meaning, signifying the "Host of Heaven," "The Planetary System." Saba, or Sheba, was especially the home of astronomical wisdom; and all words of this character mean wise in regard to the stars. The wisdom of Saba and of the Sabeans was planetary wisdom, the "Sabeian language" meaning astronomy, or astrology, the latter being the esoteric portion of the science. At the time of the mysteries, astrology was a sacred or secret science, the words "sacred" and "secret" meaning the same thing. Among the oldest mysteries, when all learning was confined to initiates, were those of Sabasia, whose periodic festivals of a sacred character were so extremely ancient that their origin is now lost.

Solomon, also, whether looked upon as a historical or a mythical character, is philologically shown to have been connected with the planetary system, Sol-Om-On signifying "the sun." It is singular to note how closely the sun, the moon and the stars are connected with ancient religions, even that of the Jewish. In the Old Testament the new moon and the Sab-bath are almost invariably mentioned together. The full moon also possessed a religious significance to the Jews, the agricultural feasts taking place at the full moon, which were called Sab-baths. Even in the Old Testament we find that Sab has an astronomical or astrological meaning, connected with the planetary system.

The Sabeans were an occult body, especially devoted to a study of the heavens; at their head, the wisest among them, the chief astronomer and astrologer of the nation, the wisest person in a nation of wisdom, was that Queen of Sheba, who visited that other planetary dignitary, Solomon, to prove him with hard astronomical and astrological questions.

There is historic proof that the city of Saba was the royal seat of the kings of Arabia, which country, Diodorus says, was never con-

quered. Among ancient peoples it bore the names of "Araby the Happy," "Araby the Blest." It was a country of gold and spices whose perfume was wafted far over the sea. All cups and utensils were of the precious metals; all beds, chairs and stools having feet of silver; the temples were magnificently adorned; and the porticoes of even the private houses were of gold inlaid with ivory and precious stones.

Among the presents carried by the Queen of Sheba to Sol-Om-On were the famous balsam trees of her country. The first attempt at plant acclimatizing of which the world has record was made with this tree by the magnificent Pharaoh, Queen Hatasu, of the brilliant eighteenth Egyptian dynasty. A thousand years before she of Sheba, Queen Hatasu, upon her return from a naval expedition to the Red Sea, carried home with her twelve of these trees in baskets of earth, which lived and became one of the three species of sacred trees of Egypt.

Arabia was the seat of Eastern wisdom, from which it also radiated to the British Isles of Europe at the time of the Celtic Druids, with whom Sabs was the day when these lords of Sabaoth rested from study and gave instructions to the people. As previously among the Jews, this day of instruction became known as one of rest from physical labor, Sab-bath and rest becoming synonymous. Seven being a sacred number among initiates, every seventh day was devoted to instruction. When a knowledge of the mysteries became lost, the words "Sab-bath," "rest" and "seven" began to have a very wrong meaning in the minds of people; and much injury has been done to the world through this perversion.

But later than Druidical times, Arabian wisdom made the southwestern portion of the European continent brilliant with learning, during the long period of the Christian dark ages, a time when, like the Bourbons of later date, Christians learned nothing, a time when no heresy arose because no thought was allowed, when there was no progress because there was no doubt.

From these countrymen of the Queen of Sheba, the Spanish Arabs, Columbus first learned of a world beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Architecture rose to its height in the beautiful Alhambra,

with its exquisite interlaced tracery in geometric design; medicine had its profound schools at various points; poetry numbered women among its most famous composers; the ballad originated there; and the modern literature of Europe was born from a woman's pen upon the hearth of the despised Ishmaelite, whose ancestral mother was known as Hagar, and whose most brilliant descendant was the Queen of Sheba.

Nowhere upon the earth has there existed a race of improvisadores equal to the daughters of that despised bondwoman, the countrywoman of the Queen of Sheba. As storytellers the world has not their equal. Scherezade is a name upon the lips of Jews, of Gentiles, of Mohammedans and of Christians. A woman's "Thousand and One Nights" is famous as a combination of wit, wisdom and occultism wherever the language of civilization is spoken. With increasing knowledge we learn somewhat of the mysteries of the inner, higher life contained in those tales of genii, of rings and of lamps of wondrous and curious power. The race descended from Hagar, of which the Queen of Sheba is the most brilliant reminder, has given to the world the most of its profound literature, elegant poetry, art, science and occultism. Arabia is the mother of mathematics; from this country was borrowed our one (1) and our cipher (0), from which all other notation is evolved.

Astronomy and astrology being among the oldest sciences, the moon early became known as "the Measurer," her varied motions, her influence upon the tides, her connection with the generative functions, all giving her a high place in the secret sciences. While in a planetary sense the Queen of Sheba has in a manner been identified with the moon, as Sabs, she was also connected with the sun, the same as Solomon and the serpent. When Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness it was specifically a part of sun worship. The golden calf of Aaron was more closely connected with moon worship, although the serpentine path of both these bodies in the heavens identified each with the serpent.

The occult knowledge which the Jews possessed in regard to those planets was borrowed by them from Egypt, where for many ages the sun and the moon had been studied in connection with their move-



ments in the zodiac. In that country these serpentine movements were symbolized by the uræus, or asp, worn upon the crown above the head of every Pharaoh. So closely was the Jewish religion connected with worship of the planetary bodies that Moses is said to have disappeared upon Mount Nebo, a word which shows the mountain to have been sacred to the moon; while Elijah ascending in a chariot of fire is a record of sun worship. When the famous woman astronomer and astrologer, Queen of Sheba, visited the symbolic King Solomon, it was for the purpose of proving him with hard planetary questions and thus learning the depth of his astronomical and his astrological knowledge, which, thanks to the planetary worship of the Jews, she found equal to her own.

We are further told that Solomon, not content with a princess from the royal house of Pharaoh as wife, married seven hundred wives, all princesses, besides taking to himself three hundred concubines. It is upon teachings of the Old Testament, and especially from this statement in regard to Solomon, that the Mormons of Utah largely base their polygamous doctrines, the revelations of Joseph Smith being upon the Solomon line. Yet the Mormons have advanced in their treatment of women from the time of Solomon. While the revelations of Joseph Smith commended plural marriages, the system and the name of concubinage was entirely omitted, each woman thus taken being endowed with the name of "wife."

The polygamy of New York, of Chicago, of London, of Paris, of Vienna and of other parts of the Christian world, like that of Solomon's three hundred, is a system of concubinage in which the woman possesses no legal rights, the mistress neither being recognized as wife, nor her children as legitimate; whereas Mormon polygamy grants Mormon respect to the second, the third, and to all subsequent wives.

The senility of old men is well illustrated in the case of Solomon, despite Biblical reference to his great wisdom, as we learn that when he became "old" he was led away by "strange" women, worshiping strange gods to whom he erected temples and offered sacrifices. To those who believe in the doctrine of re-incarnation, and who look upon the Bible as an occult work written in symbolic language,



Solomon's reputed "wives" and "concubines" are regarded as symbolic of his incarnations, the wives representing good incarnations and the concubines evil ones.

M. J. G.

*1 Kings xvii.*

8 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water and a morsel of bread.

12 And she said, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and I am gathering sticks, that I may dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail.

17 And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman fell sick; and there was no breath left in him.

18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he carried him up and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow by slaying her son?

21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

22 And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

23 And Elijah took the child and delivered him unto his mother, and said, See, thy son liveth.

24 And the woman said, Now I know that thou art a man of God.

The history of Elijah the prophet begins somewhat abruptly, without any mention of father, of family or of country. He seems, as it were, suddenly to drop from the clouds. He does not come with glad tidings of joy to the people; but with prophecies of a prolonged famine, in which there shall be neither rain nor dew to moisten the earth, until King Ahab and his people repent of their sins. Elijah himself was fed by ravens in a miraculous manner, and later by a poor widow who had only just enough in her larder to furnish one meal for herself and her son. Here are a series of complications enough to stagger the faith of the strongest believer in the supernatural. But the poor widow meets him at the gates of the city as directed by the Lord, improvises bread and water, takes him

to her home and for two years treats him with all the kindness and the attention which she would naturally give to one of her own kinsmen. "Oh! woman, great is thy faith," exclaimed the prophet. Women are so easily deluded that most of the miracles of the Bible are performed for their benefit; and, as in the case of the witch of Endor, she occasionally performs some herself.

The widow believed that Elijah was "a man of God," and that she could do whatever he ordered; that she could get water, though there had been a drought for a long time; that although she had only a handful of meal and a little cruse of oil, yet they would increase day by day. "Never did corn or olives in the growing," says Bishop Hall, "increase as did that of the widow in the using." During the two years in which she entertained the prophet, she enjoyed peace and prosperity; but when she supposed that her son was dead, her faith wavered; and she deplored her kindness to the prophet, and reproved him for bringing sorrow upon her household. However, as the prophet was able to restore him to life, her faith was restored also.

This is the first record which we have of the restoration of the dead to life in the Bible; and it is the first also of any one ascending into heaven "in a chariot of fire with horses of fire." Probably Elijah knew how to construct a balloon. Much of the ascending and the descending of seers, of angels and of prophets which astonished the ignorant was accomplished in balloons—a lost art for many centuries. No doubt that the poor widow, when she saw Elijah ascend, thought that he went straight to heaven, though in all probability he landed at twilight in some retired corn field or olive grove, at some distance from the point where his ascent took place.

The question is often asked where the ravens got the cooked meat and bread for the prophet. Knowing their impelling instinct to steal, the Creator felt safe in trusting his prophet to their care, and they proved themselves worthy his confidence. Their rookeries were near the cave where Elijah was sequestered. Having keen olfactories, they smelt the cooking of dainty viands from afar. Guided by this sense, they perched on a fence near by where they could watch the movements of the cook, and when her back was

turned they flew in and seized the little birds and soft shell crabs and carried them to Elijah, halting by the way only long enough to satisfy their own imperative hunger.

Jezebel was Elijah's greatest enemy; yet the Lord bade him hide in her country by the brook Cherith, that he might have plenty of water. The Lord hid him so that the people should not besiege him to shorten the drought. So he was entirely alone with the ravens, and had all his time for prayer and contemplation. When removed from the care of the ravens, the Lord did not send him to the rich and the prosperous, but to a poor widow, who, believing him a man of God, ministered to his necessities. She did not suggest that he was a stranger to her and that water cost money, but hastened to do whatever he ordered. She had her recompense in the restoration of her son to life. In the prophet's struggle with God for this blessing to the widow, the man appears to greater advantage than does the Master.

It appears from the reports in our metropolitan journals that a railroad is now about to be built from Tor to the summit of Mount Sinai. The mountain is only accessible on one side. A depot, it is said, will be erected near the spot where a stone cross was placed by the Russian Empress Helena, and where, according to tradition, Moses stood when receiving the commandments. The railroad will also pass the cave in which the prophet Elijah remained in hiding while fleeing from the priest of Baal.

*1 Kings xxi.*

And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee the worth of it.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth had spoken to him. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; and he answered, I will not.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying,

Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city did as Jezebel had sent unto them.

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men and sat before him: and the men witnessed against him, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is dead.

15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was dead, she said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard.

Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the Zidonians and the wife of Ahab, is generally referred to as the most wicked and cruel woman on record; and her name is the synonym of all that is evil. She came honestly by these characteristics, if it is true "that evil communications corrupt good manners," as her husband Ahab was the most wicked of all the kings of Israel. And yet he does not seem to have been a man of much fortitude; for in a slight disappointment in the purchase of land he comes home in a hopeless mood, throws himself on his bed and turns his face to the wall. According to the text, Jezebel was equal to the occasion. She not only infused new life into Ahab, but got possession of the desired land, though in a most infamous manner. The false prophetess spoken of in Rev. ii., 20, is called Jezebel. She was a devout adherent and worshiper of Baal and influenced Ahab to follow strange gods. He reigned twenty-two years without one worthy action to gild his memory. Jezebel's death, like her life, was a tragedy of evil.

E. C. S.

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All we know about Jezebel is told us by a rival religionist, who hated her as the Pope of Rome hated Martin Luther, or as an American A. P. A. now hates a Roman Catholic. Nevertheless, even the Jewish historian, evidently biassed against Jezebel by his theological prejudices as he is, does not give any facts whatever which warrant the assertion that Jezebel was any more satanic than the ancient Israelitish gentleman, to whom her theological views were opposed. Of course we, at this stage of scientific thought, know that Jezebel's religion was not an admirable one. Strangely enough, for a religion, it actually made her intolerant! But to Jeze-



bel it was a truth, for which she battled as bravely as Elijah did for what he imagined to be eternal verity. The facts, admitted even by the historian who hated her, prove that, notwithstanding her unfortunate and childish conception of theology, Jezebel was a brave, fearless, generous woman, so wholly devoted to her own husband that even wrong seemed justifiable to her, if she could thereby make him happy. (In that respect she seems to have entirely fulfilled the Southern Methodist's ideal of the pattern wife absorbed in her husband.) Four hundred of the preachers of her own faith were fed at her table (what a pity we have not their opinion of their benefactor!). Elijah was the preacher of a new and rival religion, which Jezebel, naturally, regarded with that same abhorrence which the established always feel for the innovating. To her, Elijahism doubtless appeared as did Christianity to the Jews, Lutheranism to the Pope, or John Wesleyism to the Church of England; but in the days of the Israelites the world had not developed that sweet patience with heresy which animates the Andover theologians of our time, and Jezebel had as little forbearance with Elijah as had Torquemada with the Jews or Elizabeth with the Puritans.

Yet, to do Jezebel justice, we must ask ourselves, how did the assumedly good Elijah proceed in order to persuade her of the superiority of his truth? It is painful to have to relate that that much-overestimated "man of God" invited four hundred and fifty of Jezebel's preachers to an open air exhibition of miracles, but, not satisfied with gaining a victory over them in this display, he pursued his defeated rivals in religion, shouting, "Let not one of them escape!" and thus roused the thoughtless mob of lookers-on to slaughter the whole four hundred and fifty in cold blood! Jezebel had signalized her advent as queen by slaying Israelitish preachers in order to put her own preachers in office. Elijah promptly retaliated at his earliest opportunity.

It seems to me that it would puzzle a disinterested person to decide which of those savage deeds was more "satanic" than the other, and to imagine why Jezebel is now dragged forth to "shake her gory locks" as a frightful example to the American women who ask for recognized right to self-government. I submit, that if Jezebel is a



disgrace to womankind, our dear brethren at any rate have not much cause to be proud of Elijah, so, possibly, we might strike a truce over the character of these two long-buried worthies. It may be well, though, to note here that the now most offensive epithet which the English translators attached to Jezebel's name, originally signified nothing more than that she was consecrated to the worship of a religion, rival to that which ancient Israel assumed to be "the only true one."

E. B. D.

## CHAPTER III.

*2 Kings iv.*

**1** Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

**2** And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything save a pot of oil.

**3** Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors,

**4** And when thou art come in, thou shalt

shut the door and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

**5** So she shut the door and poured out.

**6** And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

**7** Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

THE first Book of Kings had an illustrious beginning in the glories of the kingdom of Israel when it was entirely under King David and in the beginning of the reign of Solomon; but the second book has a melancholy outlook in the desolation and division of the kingdom of Israel and of Judea. Then Elijah and Elisha, their prophets, instructed the princes and the people in all that would come to pass, the captivity of the ten tribes, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the good reigns of Josiah and of Hezekiah.

This book contains the mention of four women, but only in a perfunctory manner, more to exhibit the accomplishments of the prophet Elisha than his beneficiaries. He raises the dead, surpasses our Standard Oil Company in the production of that valuable article of commerce, cures one man of leprosy and cruelly fastens the disease on his servant for being guilty of a pardonable prevarication. Only one of the women mentioned has a name. One is the widow of a prophet, whom Elisha helps to pay off all her debts; for another he intercedes with the Lord to give her a son; another, is the little captive maid of the tribe of Israel; and the last a wicked queen, Athaliah, who sought to kill the heir apparent. She rivalled Jezebel in her evil propensities and suffered the same tragic death.

As the historian proceeds from book to book less is said of the mothers of the various tribes, unless some deed of darkness is called for, that the men would fain avoid, then some Jezebel is resurrected for that purpose. They are seldom required to rise to a higher moral altitude than the men of the tribe, and are sometimes permitted to fall below it.

*2 Kings iv.*

8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread.

9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God.

10 Let us make a little chamber on the wall.

11 And it fell on a day that, he came thither; and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And she came and stood before him. And he said, Thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

17 And the woman bare a son.

18 And when the child was grown, he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And said, My head, my head! And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

20 And when he had brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

21 And she went up, and laid him on the

bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

24 And she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive; slack not thy riding, except I bid thee.

25 So she went unto the man of God to Mount Carmel.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold the child was dead.

33 He went in and shut the door and prayed unto the Lord.

34 And lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he walked to and fro; and went up, and stretched upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son.

Elisha seems to have had the same power of working miracles which Elijah possessed. In his travels about the country he often passed the city of Shunem, where he heard of a great woman who was very hospitable and had a rich husband. She had often noticed the prophet passing by; and knowing that he was a godly man, and that he could be better entertained at her house than elsewhere, she proposed to her husband to invite him there. So they arranged an apartment for him in a quiet part of the house that he might have opportunities for worship and contemplation.

After spending much time under her roof, he naturally desired to make some recompense. So he asked her if there was anything that he could do for her at court, any favor which she desired of the king.

But she said "no," as she had all the blessings which she desired, except, as they had great wealth and no children to inherit it, she would like a son. She had probably heard of all that the Lord had done in that line for Sarah and Rebecca and the wives of Manoah and Elkanah; so she was not much surprised when the prophet suggested such a contingency; and she bare a son.

In due time, when the son was grown, he was taken suddenly ill and died. The mother supposed that, as by a miracle he was brought into life, the prophet might raise him from the dead. Accordingly, she harnessed her mule and hastened to the prophet, who promptly returned with her and restored him to life. She was a very discreet and judicious woman and her husband had always entrusted everything to her management. She was devout and conscientious and greatly enjoyed the godly conversation of the prophet. She was known in the city as a great and good woman. Though we find here and there among the women of the Bible some exceptionally evil minded, yet the wise and virtuous predominate, and, fortunately for the race, this is the case in the American Republic to-day.

*2 Kings v.*

1 Now Naaman, captain of the hosts of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

2 And the Syrians had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

Naaman, a Syrian general and prime minister, was a great man in a great place. He was happy, too, in that he had been serviceable to his country and honored by his prince. But alas! he was a leper. It was generally supposed that this was an affliction for evil doing, but Naaman was an exceptionally perfect man.

A little maid from Israel had been carried captive into Syria and fortunately was taken into the family of the great general, as an attendant on his wife. While making the wife's toilet they no doubt chatted quite freely of what was going on in the outside world. So the little maid, sympathizing with her master in his affliction, told the

wife there was a prophet in Israel who could cure him of his leprosy. Her earnestness roused him and his wife to make the experiment. But after loading his white mules with many valuable gifts, and taking a great retinue of soldiers to dazzle the prophet with Syrian magnificence, the prophet did not deign to meet him, but sent word to him to bathe in the river Jordan. Even a letter from the king did not ensure a personal interview. So the general, with all his pomp, went off in great wrath. "Are not," said he, "the rivers of Damascus, Abana and Pharpar, greater than the Jordan? Cannot all the skill in Syria accomplish as much as the prophet in Israel?" However, the little maid urged him to try the river Jordan, as he was near that point, so he did and was healed.

*2 Kings viii.*

Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, sojourn wheresoever thou canst for a famine shall come upon the land seven years.

2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God:

3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and land.

4 And the king talked with Gehazi saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman cried to the king for her house and land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

In due time her husband died; and there was a famine; and she went for a season to the land of the Philistines; and when she returned she could not recover her possessions. Then Elisha befriended her and appealed to the king; and she was reinstated in her own home.

Elisha was very democratic. He had his servant sleep in his own chamber and consulted him in regard to many important matters. Gehazi never forgot his place but once, when he ran after the great Syrian general to ask for the valuable presents which the prophet had declined. Both Elijah and Elisha preferred to do their missionary work among the common people, finding them more teachable and superstitious. Especially is this true of woman at all periods. In great revival seasons in our own day, one will always



see a dozen women on the anxious seat to one man, and the same at the communion table.

*2 Kings xi.*

And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 But Jehosheba, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him and his nurse.

3 And he was with her hid in the house of the Lord six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

12 And Jehoiada the priest brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him; and they made him king, and anoint-

ed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came into the temple of the Lord.

14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar; and she rent her clothes and cried, Treason, treason.

20 And they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.

21 Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

Never was royal blood more profusely shed, and never a meaner ambition than to destroy a reigning family in order to be the last occupant on the throne. The daughter of a king, the wife of a king, and the mother of a king, should have had some mercy on her family descendants. Personal ambition can never compensate for the loss of the love and companionship of kindred. Such characters as Athaliah are abnormal, their lives not worth recording.

*2 Kings xxii.*

11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

12 And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest,

13 Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

14 So Hilkiah the priest, and the wise men went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college); and they communed with her.

15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me.

16 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods.

18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him,

19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place,

20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

The greatest character among the women thus far mentioned is Huldah the prophetess, residing in the college in Jerusalem. She

was a statesman as well as a prophetess, understanding the true policy of government and the Jewish system of jurisprudence, able not only to advise the common people of their duties to Jehovah and their country, but to teach kings the sound basis for a kingdom. Her wisdom and insight were well known to Josiah the king; and when the wise men came to him with the "Book of the Law," to learn what was written therein, Josiah ordered them to take it to Huldah, as neither the wise men nor Josiah himself could interpret its contents. It is fair to suppose that there was not a man at court who could read the book; hence the honor devolved upon Huldah. Even Shallum her husband was not consulted, as he occupied the humble office of keeper of the robes.

While Huldah was pondering great questions of State and Ecclesiastical Law, her husband was probably arranging the royal buttons and buckles of the household. This is the first mention of a woman in a college. She was doubtless a professor of jurisprudence, or of the languages. She evidently had other gifts besides that of prophecy.

We should not have had such a struggle in our day to open the college doors had the clergy read of the dignity accorded to Huldah. People who talk the most of what the Bible teaches often know the least about its contents. Some years ago, when we were trying to establish a woman's college, we asked a rich widow, worth millions, to contribute. She said that she would ask her pastor what she ought to do about it. He referred her to the Bible, saying that this book makes no mention of colleges for women. To her great surprise, I referred her to 2 Kings xxii. Both she and her pastor felt rather ashamed that they did not know what their Bible did teach. The widow gave \$30,000 soon after to a Theological Seminary, being more interested in the education of boys and in the promulgation of church dogmas, creeds and superstitions, than in the education of the Mothers of the Race in the natural sciences.

Now, women had performed great deeds in Bible times. Miriam had helped to lead Israel out of Egypt. Deborah judged them, and led the army against the enemy, and Huldah instructed them in their duties to the nation. Although Jeremiah and Zephaniah were

prophets at this time, yet the king chose Huldah as the oracle. She was one of the ladies of the court, and resided in the second rank of buildings from the royal palace. Marriage, in her case, does not appear to have been any obstacle in the way of individual freedom and dignity. She had evidently outgrown the curse of subjection pronounced in the Garden of Eden, as had many other of the Jewish women.

There is a great discrepancy between the character and the conduct of many of the women, and the designs of God as set forth in the Scriptures and enforced by the discipline of the Church to-day. Imagine the moral hardihood of the reverend gentlemen who should dare to reject such women as Deborah, Huldah and Vashti as delegates to a Methodist conference, and claim the approval of God for such an indignity.

In the four following books, from Kings to Esther, there is no mention of women. During that long, eventful period the men must have sprung, Minerva-like, from the brains of their fathers, fully armed and equipped for the battle of life. Having no infancy, there was no need of mothers. As two remarkable women flourished at the close of one period and at the dawn of the other, we shall make no record of the masculine dynasty which intervened, satisfied that Huldah and Vashti added new glory to their day and generation—one by her learning and the other by her disobedience; for “Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.”

E. C. S.