

angel's address. There was very deep and real penitence. They had been led astray by weak faith and neglect of duty. They had not realized their folly and danger. Words so full of sorrowing love as well as sharp reproof went to their hearts. But still they did not "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," they allowed the heathen altars to remain. "Though they now shewed signs of deep abasement and sorrow of spirit, yet we do not find, from the ensuing history, that any general or permanent reformation took place; though they now relented, they soon relapsed, and involved themselves afresh and still more deeply in the guilt of defection and idolatry. (Bush). "Many are melted under the word that harden again before they are cast in a new mould." (Henry).

**5. Bochim**—*The weepers.* It may have been some spot in or near Shiloh like "the Jews wailing place" in Jerusalem, where every Friday the Jews pray and lament. **They sacrificed there**—"They had recourse to the blood of sprinkling for the remission of their sin. They did not hope to pacify their offended God with tears only. Tears, even if they were to flow in rivers, could never wash away sin. The blood of atonement is indispensable, without which there is no remission." (Bush).

**II. FORGETFUL DESCENDENTS. 6.** **When Joshua had let the people go**—After the solemn renewal of the covenant (Josh. 24: 28-31). These words are repeated here for the sake of connection and to introduce the history of the successive declensions of Israel. "After being so happily fixed in their several inheritances and having commenced their settlement in Canaan under such favorable auspices, it greatly aggravated their sin, that they should afterwards have fallen away from God, and so grievously disappointed the promise which their fair beginnings held out." (Bush).

**7.** This verse contains the record of some 40 or 50 years. One cannot be struck with the remarkable influence which Joshua and the pious men who surrounded him exercised upon their generation. For half a century he was able to keep the fickle people steadfast in their allegiance to the God of their fathers. By his own influence while he lived, and after his death by the influence of those whom he had trained during his lifetime, the contagion of idolatry was checked, and the service of God maintained. The light of a genuine Christian life is a light which will make itself seen wherever it shines. In the home, be it palace or cottage, in the village street, in the town court, in the shop, in the factory, in the camp, in the ship, in the social circle, be it humble or be it exalted, be it rude or be it refined, be it unlettered or be it literary and scientific, the influence of a pure, humble, vigorous, devout Christian life must be felt. It must be a power wherever it is. How careful we should be to check any action, or course of action, which

may weaken or impede such influence. An outbreak of temper, a single grasping or unscrupulous action, a single step in the path of selfishness, or uncharitable disregard of another's feelings or interests, may undo the effect of many good words and good works. (Hervey).

**8. The servant of the Lord**—A title of nobility in God's kingdom. Bestowed also upon Moses (Rev. 15: 3), Daniel (Dan. 6: 20), Paul (Titus 1: 1) and James (James 1: 1). **A hundred and ten years old**—The age of Joseph when he died (Gen. 50: 26).

**9. Timnath-heres**—(*Portion of the sun*). Called in Josh. 24: 30, Timnath-serah—(*Portion of abundance*). The name may have been given to it from some memorial there of the sun standing still at the command of Joshua (Josh. 10: 12, 13). *Kefi-Haris*, nine miles south of Shechem, is the site pointed out by Jewish tradition. Of the location of Gaash nothing is known.

**10. Another generation**—"The slackness in exterminating the Canaanites, of which the first chapter has given an account, was accompanied by a slackness in the godly training of their own children." (Douglas). They had not fought for their liberties and homes and so did not know their worth. Let us beware of lightly esteeming the faith and freedom which we possess. **Knew not the Lord**—"Had no practical or experimental knowledge of him; no deep or lively impression of his goodness; no affectionate, grateful, or devout sense of the wondrous manifestations of his power in their behalf." (Bush). The memory of God's great works gradually faded away, and, with this memory, their influence upon the hearts of the people. They had no independent strength, no power to stand firm by themselves. Their religion, their good conduct depended upon another. He was the buttress that supported them; when the buttress was taken away they fell. Hence the caution not to trust in mere influence, but to look well to the foundations of our own faith. The influence of another man is no substitute for a converted heart, and for soundness in faith and love. St. Paul well knew the difference in some of his followers when he was present and when he was absent, and so would have their faith stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. It behoves us all to take care of our real principles of action, to examine ourselves, to prove our own selves, whether we be in the faith, whether Christ be really formed in us, whether we are seeking only to please those who have influence over us, or to please God. Else that may happen to us which happened to the Israelites, our upright Christian walk will last as long as we have the support of the good and strong, and no longer. We shall serve the Lord for a while only, and end by serving Baalim and Ashtaroth. The sober Christian life will be exchanged for folly and dissipation, and the pure creed degenerate into superstition or unbelief. (Hervey).