

sider that the denunciation relates to temporal matters. God, who is the great Lord of the whole world, may surely so punish a man for his sins that the temporal consequences may reach not only himself alone, but his posterity also. Even by human laws this is done. In the case of high treason, the father, by forfeiting his honour and estate, brings the evil consequences of his crime upon his family as well as upon himself—and the power which enacts the penalty of the law may justly be said to visit the children with the offence which their father committed. The sin of idolatry, against which this denunciation was made, was the greatest national crime that could have been committed.—It was high treason against the Supreme Majesty of the state during the Theocracy, or while the Jews continued under the immediate government of God. The offenders, therefore, and even the enticers to idolatry, whether cities or individuals, were, by the municipal law, utterly destroyed. The meaning of this part of the Commandment then is this, God had, in general, promised *temporal* blessings to the Jews to encourage them to obedience to his general laws, and had denounced *present* evils against them to prevent their infraction. But to set a particular mark of his indignation against the sin of Idolatry, a sin which must, of its own nature, involve the breach of all his laws, he thought it necessary to declare that if they offended in this particular he would not only severely punish them himself—but would deliver them up into the hands of their enemies who should afflict both them and their children after them. But if they stedfastly adhered to his worship, even though they should be guilty of many lesser crimes, he would not cast them off from his favour but would bless both them and their posterity all their days. Of this their history furnishes us with abundance of evidence.—“Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon; and will give ten tribes to thee; because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the God of the Moabites and Milcom the God of the children of Ammon and have not walked in my ways.”—Again “thus saith the Lord—Behold I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, because they have forsaken me and have burnt incense unto other Gods.” When Manasseh had “built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed and reared up altars for Baal and made a grove,” we find this to be the reason why they were afterwards punished by the visit of Nebuchadnezzar and the consequent rebellion of Jehoiakim, “surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight for the sins of Manasseh and according to all that he did.” And the cause of the Jewish captivity is thus expressed in the lamentations of Jeremiah.—“Our fathers have sinned and are