

SERMON.

JUDGES II. 1-5.—“*And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; and ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars. But ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim, and they sacrificed there unto the Lord.*”

“The children of Israel” were “a peculiar people”—peculiar in their origin, peculiar in their progress, peculiar in their destiny. They were God’s “peculiar people.” He bestowed on them peculiar privileges. To these a special reference is made in the text. Even when slaves in Egypt they were the objects of his peculiar care, insomuch that “the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew.” And when the time of their emancipation came, “even the set time,” He brought them out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, from the house of their bondage, and gave them for a possession the “goodly land” of Canaan—driving out its native inhabitants, more numerous by far, and more powerful than they, before them; and maintaining with them, through their leaders, the most constant, and immediate, we might almost call it, personal communication. Yet were they “a stiff-necked and rebellious people.” Their wanderings for forty years, and the fall of an entire generation in the wilderness, are the proof to us, as they were to themselves the punishment, of their heinous sins. The new generation carried with them into the land of Canaan the same discontented and