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RÉMARKS ON MICAH VI. 8.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good : and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Speaking in the name of the Lord, the prophet says at the fifth verse, "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim and Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord". On the ground of this reference, some have been inclined to view the sixth and seventh verses as questions which Balak proposed to Balaam in his consultation, and the words of the eighth verse as the answer which Balaam returned. The king of Moab is thus to be considered as desiring to know how he might find acceptance with the God of Israel, and Balaam as setting before him in all faithfulness the requirements of God's law. This is a view, however, which will not bear a close examination. The narrative in the twenty-second chapter of the book of Numbers shows that Balak's solicitude was not about acceptance with God, but as to how he might bring a curse upon Israel. The twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters contain the remarkable blessings which Balaam was constrained by God *publicly* to pronounce upon that people whom Balak was desirous to destroy: and as to *any private advice*, the statement in Revelation ii. 14, about "the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication", forbids us to suppose that in connexion with such counsel which was but too faithfully followed out, he could have said, "and what doth the Lord

require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God".

A more satisfactory view of the connexion may be obtained by attending to the beginning of the chapter. The prophet there announces the commission he had received to make known God's controversy with his people for the ingratitude with which they had requited his manifold acts of kindness to them. In pleading this controversy, the Lord, at the third verse, challenges his people to show any cause which he had given them for their estrangement from Him. "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me". In order that they might understand God's righteousness in this controversy, they are reminded of the way in which He had delivered them from Egypt; conducted them through the wilderness under the guidance of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; how he had defeated the wicked machinations of Balak when, at the suggestion of Balaam, he endeavoured to draw them into sin so that God might cast them off and destroy them; and how He had brought them from Shittim, where these snares were spread for them, to the promised land, even to Gilgal, where (Josh. v. 9) the reproach of Egypt was rolled away from them. This statement of the Lord's controversy is not without effect. The people are awakened to a sense of their sin, they have some apprehension of their danger, and, under deep convictions, they cry out "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old?—Will the Lord be pleased with thousands