

How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing that we have sworn by Jehovah that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?" (vs. 6, 7.) Moreover, the judgment was but the exercise of this mercy, for the cutting off of Jabesh-gilead was with a view to the restoration of Benjamin. Such was the way that Israel came out of that long and painful conflict. Happy indeed are they who learn from such circumstances, and know how to combine *perfect hatred* of evil, with unmingled love for their brethren. The four hundred young virgins of Jabesh-gilead were given for wives to the poor remnant of Benjamin.

But that did not suffice; the wound must be completely bound up. Love was ingenious in finding the remedy and suggested to Israel a way of helping their brethren without disowning their obligations toward God, or lowering the standard of separation from evil. Israel allowed themselves to be plundered at Shiloh (vs. 17-21), as it were under the eyes of Jehovah. Exchanging the victor's place for that of the vanquished, they permitted their brother, so sorely tried by the discipline, to have the last word.

"And it shall be," they said, "when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes, because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war" (ver. 22). Israel did not say: *They* reserved not, but "*we* reserved not." What delicacy and tenderness did those words evince, and how different from those recorded in chapter xx. 12. "What wickedness is this that is done among *you*?" Israel no longer separated their cause from that of their brethren and the unity of the people, formed by God Himself, recovered its due place of importance