

brought a spirit of toleration for, if not of sympathy with, heathen worship. Wealth increased, the arts and sciences were cultivated, the intellectual character of the people was wonderfully improved; but the Jews, instead of coming more and more under the allegiance to Jehovah, influenced by Solomon's policy, were really growing less and less loyal to their national god. Bible history gives but little information of the religious attitude of the Hebrews under Solomon's rule. Its silence on this point, however, speaks volumes. Either the prophets, so powerful in David's time, were not at all active under Solomon, or they were not at all influential with the King, for we hear nothing of them. The glory and magnificence of Solomon's reign retarded the evolution of the Hebrew conception of God. There can be no other intelligent conclusion concerning the effects of this king's rule over Israel. It is true that historians, who wrote centuries after his time, praise Solomon for his wisdom, but their praise is mingled with apologies for his weakness and frailties which they attribute to the influence of his foreign wives. (See I. Kings, xi., 1-8). Again, we have the truth illustrated that we must not look to kings nor mighty rulers as channels through which righteousness shall be exalted in the world. Happy are the nations whose rulers promote righteousness by at least not obstructing its progress.

Solomon, dying, left a discontented and inharmonious people, no longer bound together either by patriotism or religion. In the rebellion of the Northern tribes that followed soon thereafter, Israel was separated from Judah, and for three hundred years the Hebrew people were involved in almost constant warfare. Adversity was, however, far more propitious for the development of pure religion in the Hebrew character than was prosperity. It is easy to understand that a people whose faith in God was of such a character as led them to believe that when

Jehovah visited his people with prosperity, he was pleased with their actions, and when misfortune and distress came upon them, it was a sign of Jehovah's displeasure with their conduct of affairs, would naturally fall into spiritual lethargy under a reign like Solomon's, and would be quickened in their religious character when war and famine and pestilence prevailed.

When, therefore, under Jereboam's leadership on the one hand and Rehoboam's on the other, Israel warred against Judah, the prophets again came into prominence. The mission of these at first seemed principally to decry mage worship in the northern kingdom. The condemnation of the successive kings was, that they "did evil in the sight of the Lord," in that they committed "the sin of Jereboam, the son of Nebat."

The critical student of the Bible will recognize in this condemnation the sentiment of a post-exilic writer, who was an adherent of the house of Judah, and who thus cannot be entirely impartial, but he will also recognize the candor of the writer, in that he makes the Kings of Judah far from faithful to Jehovah (I. Kings, xiv., 22-24). Because of this unfaithfulness, it is represented (II. Chron., xii., 2), that the armies of Egypt laid waste the fortresses of Judah even up to the gates of Jerusalem, this city being saved only because "the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves, and they said, 'the Lord is righteous.'"

In tracing up the evolution of the Hebrew conception of God, we must not overlook the significance of this growing faith of Israel in a God that is a rewarder of righteousness.

We know that it was not because of any direct intervention of God that the kingdoms of either Rehoboam or Jereboam tottered; God did not send Shishak of Egypt with his three-score thousand horsemen against Judah, nor did He decree that all of the sons of Jereboam should be eaten by dogs, or the fowls of the air. The kingdom of