

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

IMPORTANT

FACTS OF FAITH,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE HISTORY OF

HOLY MEN OF OLD.

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from the mouth of GOD while he was with him in the mount. If the people of GOD had obeyed the principles of the ten commandments, there would have been no need of the specific directions given to Moses, which he wrote in a book, relative to their duty to GOD and to one another. The definite directions which the LORD gave to Moses in regard to the duty of his people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the ten commandments simplified, and given in a definite manner that they need not err.

The LORD said of the children of Israel, "Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols, wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." Because of continual disobedience, the LORD annexed penalties to the transgression of his law, which were not good for the transgressor, or whereby he should not live in his rebellion.

By transgressing the law which God had given in such majesty, and amid glory which was unapproachable, the people showed open contempt of the great LAWGIVER, and death was the penalty. "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they walked not in my statutes, and they de-

spised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. And my sabbaths they greatly polluted. Then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them."

The statutes and judgments given of God were good for the obedient. "They should live in them." But they were not good for the transgressor, for in the civil law given to Moses punishment was to be inflicted on the transgressor, that others should be restrained by fear.

Moses charged the children of Israel to obey God. He said unto them, "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you."

The LORD instructed Moses definitely in regard to the ceremonial sacrifices, which were to cease at the death of CHRIST. The system of sacrifices foreshadowed the offering of CHRIST as a LAMB without blemish.

The LORD first established the system of sacrificial offerings with Adam after his fall, which he taught to his descendants. This system was corrupted before the flood by those who separated themselves from the faithful followers of God, and engaged in the building of the tower of Babel. They sacrificed to gods of their own make instead of the God of Heaven. They did not offer sacrifices

because they had faith in the REDEEMER to come, but because they thought they should please their gods by offering a great many beasts upon polluted idol altars. Their superstition led them to great extravagances. They taught the people that the more valuable the sacrifice, the greater pleasure would it give their idol gods, and the greater would be the prosperity and riches of their nation. Hence human beings were often sacrificed to these senseless idols. Those nations had laws and regulations to control the actions of the people which were cruel in the extreme. Their laws were made by those whose hearts were not softened by grace, and while they would pass over the most debasing crimes, a small offense would call forth the most cruel punishment from those in authority.

Moses had this in view when he said to Israel, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so

righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

God was a wise and compassionate lawgiver, judging all cases righteously, and without partiality. While the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage, they were surrounded with idolatry. The Egyptians had received traditions in regard to sacrificing. They did not acknowledge the existence of the God of Heaven. They sacrificed to their idol gods. With great pomp and ceremony they performed their idol worship. They erected altars to the honor of their gods, and they required even their own children to pass through the fire. After they had erected their altars they required their children to leap over the altars through the fire. If they could do this without their being burned, the idol priests and people received it as an evidence that their god accepted their offerings, and favored especially the person who passed through the fiery ordeal. He was loaded with benefits, and was ever afterward greatly esteemed by all the people. He was never allowed to be punished, however aggravating might be his crimes. If another person who leaped through the fire was so unfortunate as to be burned, then his fate was fixed; for they thought that their gods were angry, and would be appeased with nothing short of the unhappy victim's life, and he was offered up as a sacrifice upon their idol altars.

Even some of the children of Israel had so

far degraded themselves as to practice these abominations, and GOD caused the fire to kindle upon their children, whom they made to pass through the fire. They did not go to all the lengths of the heathen nations; but GOD deprived them of their children by causing the fire to consume them in the act of passing through it.

Because the people of GOD had confused ideas of the ceremonial sacrificial offerings, and had heathen traditions confounded with their ceremonial worship, GOD condescended to give them definite directions, that they might understand the true import of those sacrifices which were to last only till the LAMB of GOD should be slain, who was the great antitype of all their sacrificial offerings.