

city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods. . . thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil thereof into the midst of the street and shalt burn with fire the city and all the spoil."—Deut. xiii: 12-16.

The practice of witchcraft, divinations and similar mystic arts was a criminal act, since a person in the exercise thereof either in reality stood under demoniacal influence or, with the intent to deceive, pretended to have supernatural powers at his command. The basis of this law was that persons of this class usurped divine prerogatives in attempting to perform miracles without being commissioned to do so by Him to whom alone belongs authority as well as glory and dominion. They were therefore to be stoned to death.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Ex. xxii, 18. "A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them." Lev. xx, 27.

A special provision relates to false prophets. They were to be put to death, but how is not specified. Probably the judges were to determine this in each case. The law is:

"The prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." Deut. xviii, 20.

False prophets should be put to death even if they could give signs and perform wonders. And they were to be tested by their doctrines.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he speak unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul . . . and that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death." Deut. xiii: 1-5.

Using the name of the Deity except for purposes of the most reverential worship was considered blasphemy, and the punishment of this offense was death by stoning. An instance of this is given in the following narrative:

"A son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this son of the Israelitish woman strove with a man of Israel; and the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed: and they brought him to Moses; and they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shown them. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth God

shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death." Lev. xxiv: 10-16.

An instance of image worship and the awful consequences thereof is given in Ex. xxxii: 28-29, where it is stated that the Levites, because of the golden calf made by Aaron, were sent out with unsheathed swords to execute the judgment, and there fell in one day about three thousand men.

The violation of the Sabbath was also an offense against God, and the punishment was death by stoning.

"Verily, my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath, therefore: for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall be surely put to death: for whosoever doeth any work thereon, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Ex. xxxi: 13, 14.

No work should be done on that day, not even as much as the kindling of a fire.

"Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." Ex. xxxv: 3.

A Sabbath-day's journey was somewhat less than a mile, or the distance between the tabernacle and the extreme point of the camp. To travel more than this distance on a Sabbath was to break it.

It is a striking feature of the law that each one of these offenses brought death upon the offender. But several facts must be considered in regard to this.

Since the government was theocratic, offenses of this kind were high treason. To give allegiance to other gods, to blaspheme the most holy name, or to break the Sabbath, which was "a sign of the covenant" between the people and their divine King, was to desert their own flag, so to speak, in a time of war and to give allegiance to the enemy. It was a *crimen majestatis* of the gravest nature imaginable, considering the exalted dignity of Him against whom the crimes were committed or the insults offered. An offense of this nature—high treason, has always been punished with death.

Then it must be remembered that there was in this state no danger of an innocent person being condemned to death. For the judges in the highest courts had access to the sanctuary of God, who was Himself the Supreme Judge, as the sovereigns are in many monarchical countries. All doubtful cases could be appealed to him in the same manner as the case of blasphemy which we have quoted above. The possibility of putting a

wrongfully accused person to death was in this way excluded, as long as the people walked according to the laws and statutes given by the Law-giver. It will readily be admitted that God, who is the source of life, has perfect right, when necessary, to take away the life He has given.

Another fact is also remarkable. The ceremonial law (to which will be referred hereafter) had a special provision by which those who could prove that they had through ignorance, committed any crime might present a sacrifice instead of their own life. By this provision the criminal laws with its severe punishments was restricted to those only who were deliberately committing the various offenses. The provision referred to reads:

"If any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty, or, if his sin which he has sinned, come to his knowledge; then he shall bring his offering . . . and he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering . . . and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him." Lev. iv: 27-31.

It must be remembered that this code was given in a remote age and to a people just emerging from slavery and barbarism. We are simply presenting prominent features of that code as revealed for that age and people, more of which will be mentioned hereafter. Today times and circumstances are different. We are under another dispensation and what might now appear as extreme and vengeful, was, no doubt, adapted to the period and the people who were to be governed thereby. God was the Supreme Ruler in Church and State, and the whole theory of the Mosaic law was based on that hypothesis.

THE "BIG FIELD."

THERE lies in the southern portion of this city a district known as the Big Field. The rising generation and many of the new arrivals are probably unacquainted with the primitive history of this district.

In the *Frontier Guardian* of Feb. 7, 1849, published at Kanawville (now Council Bluffs), Iowa, appears an epistle from President Brigham Young to Elders Hyde, Smith and Benson, and all the Saints scattered abroad. This epistle narrates the progress and prospects of the settlers in the Salt Lake Valley. One paragraph in it reads as follows:

"At our suggestion the brethren have entered into a combination to enclose a Big Field for farming purposes, and already there has been 863 applications for lots in it, taking up 11,045 acres of land