

In verse 6 the people draw water and pour it out on the ground. This pouring out may be part of the self denial of fasting or it may be a libation (drink offering). Either way, it is not a practice prescribed in the law. It seems to be a spontaneous act of humility as the Israelites mourn at Kiriath-jearim rather than rejoice at Beth-shemesh.

Mr. Kelly says of this irregularity that *“the remedy for a ruined state of things in the church of God, just as here in Israel, does not consist in going back to each form which existed at the beginning. One looks first and foremost for brokenness of spirit — for the sense of where we have all got to — in the dishonour done to God; then we begin to see more clearly our place of obedience in all that remains. But without the judgment of self and of the church's state in the presence of God nothing can be right; whereas, if this be wrought in us, His grace will surely show us from His word what suits such a state of confusion and weakness ...*

Supposing for instance, at the present time, the church of God awakened to feel its long-continued departure from God, what would be the first and natural resource? Why to set up twelve apostles, and to yearn after tongues and miracles, if not to imitate the circumstances of the Pentecostal Church in the community afterwards. But what would be the spiritual judgment suited to the present state of the church? Setting up apostles? No such presumptuous dream, but to sit down ourselves in dust and ashes before God, taking on us the shame and sorrow of the church reduced to ruin by the sin of those whom God had so deeply favoured.”

“We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life ...” (2 Samuel 14:14).

Notes

7:12 Ebenezer means “stone of help.”

Questions for study and discussion:

1. Why would the ark reside at the Kirith-jearim for twenty years instead of in the tabernacle at Shiloh?
2. What are the Baals and Ashtoreths?
3. Verse 6 calls Samuel a judge. What other roles does he play?

4. Why do you think the Philistines choose this time to attack the Hebrews? Is there an analogy with Satan's attacks on us?
5. How is the Israelites' response to this attack different than before? How does that apply to us?
6. In what ways does Samuel serve the people of God? How can we?