

--Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?
 All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing
 and vanity. Then in v. 18 ff. we have a very common theme--the idea of the idols. The
 Israelites before they went into exile were often guilty of falling into idol worship.
 In the course of the exile the Israelites were cured and never again did Israel seem to
 be tempted to follow idols--idolatry was something that they faced and settled at this
 time. Of course there have been individual Israelites that have gone off into idolatry
 and many today are in Christian Science but not as a nation did they go off into the
 attraction of idolatry. In the Macc. time the attraction of the Greek culture was very
 apparent to them and a certain amount of idolatry might have been in adjunct to that, but
 it was not the main thing. When we get over into the time of Caligula after the death of
 Christ, according to the records, we read how he sent a great statue of himself which he
 ordered to be put up in the temple--of course Cal. was going mad and he thought that he
 was God and had people at Rome praying to him and many temples were put up in Rome and
 they also brought a tremendous statue of him to Jerusalem and thousands of Jews put them-
 selves in front of this image as it came so they would have to be trampled underneath and
 they would first have to be destroyed before they could get it through. They didn't active-
 ly fight against it but they put themselves in the way where they would have to have been
 slaughtered and the Roman Govt. refused to do and fortunately Caligula died before word
 reached him but on the whole the Jews have been very true on this point since the exile.
 They have opposed idolatry. But at this time idolatry held some sway and it would be
 a little unnatural for this to be at the time of Christ--vs. 18 ff. The people by that
 time have been thoroughly convinced but at that time it did seem to be a very vital question.
 When they first came out of Egypt there was very little idolatry but there was a lot of
 teaching that had to be done from that time on, and I doubt if there was much falling into
 idolatry for quite some time, but after a time they began to fall into it and from then
 on they would have their seasons for falling into it every so often but the exile seems
 to have struck the death-blow to idolatry. Even after that the Jews always remember Him
 as the God who had delivered them from Egypt. The return from exile seems to be little
 made of in Jewish services and remembrances. I imagine there are more passages against
 idolatry from 40-55 than all of the rest of the Bible put together.